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Care Improves With Electronic Records

(Ivanhoe Newswire) – A new study examined the many benefits of using electronic medical records during an emergency. Researchers found electronic records streamline care and cut costs.

A patient's medical history is important for doctors who are deciding treatment steps, but it's often hard to find during a mass casualty incident. Researchers from Christiana Care Health System in Wilmington, DE, conducted a study to look at the benefits of using radiofrequency devices that electronically contain a patient's medical records.

Study authors created a mass casualty scenario and found the technology could not only improve treatments, but also save money. Researchers say they estimate the per-patient savings would average almost \$700 per patient simply by avoiding extraneous medical tests.

"Health care providers can incorporate this information to deliver appropriate care in a timely cost-effective manner," says lead study author Paul Sierzenski, MD. "Using radiofrequency devices represent one potential means for allowing a secure patient identifier and access to patient medical history."

SOURCE: Presented at the 2008 SAEM Annual Meeting, May 30, 2008 in Washington, DC