

## Companies

# ABELMed offers handwriting to text conversion

By Rosie Lombardi

**D**octors who want an EMR but hate to type have a new option. Burlington-based ABELMed's EMR solution enables physicians to increase their speed of documentation by using the handwriting recognition functionality of tablet PCs that run on Microsoft Windows. The ABELMed EMR system is eligible for OntarioMD funding.

"ABELMed EMR works seamlessly with the handwriting recognition functionality on slates and tablets running Windows OS so healthcare providers can continue to write notes at their usual pace, but still enter the necessary documentation into the EMR," says Dr. V. J. Kulkarni (pictured), medical director at ABELMed.

Many tablets come equipped with handwriting recognition apps and features, and the ABELMed EMR is integrated with those running Windows to convert handwritten text into data that is instantly entered into the EMR system.

Dr. Michael Clarfield, director of Toronto-based Sports Medicine Specialists (SMS) clinic and former Head Team Physician for the Toronto Maple Leafs, has been using the feature with his ABELMed EMR for the past two years.

He says tablets allow him to interact with patients in a more natural fashion. "I really like it. I don't like using desktop PCs. The tablet creates a much better interaction with your patient. It's more similar to

what you were doing prior to EMR. I don't see a reason why you would not use it, actually. I think it's a much better way to do the consultation," says Clarfield.

He says it has helped tremendously in moving painlessly from a paper-based system to an EMR system. "It's the best way of going from paper to EMR. By using the tablet with handwriting recognition and ABELMed, it's been a relatively seamless transition for us, compared to some of the nightmare scenarios you hear about EMR implementations."

The handwriting recognition feature is quite accurate, he says. "Training" the software to recognize his handwriting didn't take much time. "I was using it immediately, and it was pretty good. It was fairly accurate from the get-go, and simply got more accurate. It learns over time what words you use regularly, and so when you go to edit it, you just point to the words it got wrong, correct it and it puts it into the dictionary."

With a quick review of the record, he can catch any errors the software makes and fix them immediately.

Clarfield says his typing skills are not good, but the handwriting feature works exactly the same way typing would: you call up an EMR record with fields, and write into the fields instead of typing

information. The software immediately converts the writing into text data.

"I don't feel that what I'm doing is very different from what I used to do before we got the EMR. And I'm not tied to my desktop PC. I can go from room to room, sit wherever I want and still make my notes."

Recent models of slates and tablets running Windows OS are significantly lighter and come with a screen that can be flipped, which facilitates handwriting, says

Kulkarni. "Their portability makes it easier for physicians to carry them from one examination room to another and chart during the visit without losing the face-to-face contact with their patient. Real time synchronization with other users such as the front desk avoids duplicate charting, saving time and effort. For many practitioners, investment in a slate or tablet is all they need, saving thousands

of dollars in hardware."

ABELMed is offering a risk-free, full money back and data export guarantee. Doctors can use the EMR system for up to six months, and if they're not satisfied, the company will refund all payments and will also provide all the data entered into the ABELMed EMR in an electronically readable format, at no additional cost.

For more information, visit [www.abelmed.com](http://www.abelmed.com).



Dr. V. J. Kulkarni