



## **Hull Medical Clinic Awarded Caring With Excellence Award**

Hull Medical Clinic was awarded the Caring with Excellence Award from the Avera Quality Congress for implementing a computer-based patient history in a family practice setting.

When patients of Dr. Scott Rens of the Hull Medical Clinic, come for an appointment they are asked to complete a computerized questionnaire. The computer program will walk patients through a series of questions designed to give Dr. Rens a more complete picture of the patient's symptoms and past medical history.

The use of the computerized interview improves the level of care provided to patients in several ways. Patients are able to complete the initial interview at their own pace, they are given more opportunity to formulate questions for Dr. Rens, and they can provide information that they may otherwise find difficult to discuss face to face.

"This program has proven to be an invaluable resource for my patients," says Dr. Rens. "There have been several instances where the computerized patient interview has allowed me to address problems that otherwise may never have been discussed in person."

Research conducted by the Department of Family Medicine, University of Wisconsin-Madison found a high level of willingness to use computer interviewing in family medicine.

Hull Medical Clinic's own survey results indicate that 90 percent of those individuals surveyed across all age groups thought it was easy to use. Another 81 percent thought the questions were relevant and 95 percent said they would use it again.

Computerized questionnaires are being used for all types of exams, with the exception of obstetric patients. If a patient is too ill, uncomfortable or otherwise unable to complete the questionnaire, a nurse will conduct the interview instead.

Dr. Rens and Medical Clinic Director, Mary McClung, were recently asked to present on this technology at the Fourth Annual Summit on Health Information Technology in Iowa, an event sponsored by the Iowa Foundation for Medical Care and the Iowa Medical Society.

This project team included Dr. Scott Rens, nursing, reception, hospital administration and information technology staff.

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