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Catholic Health EHR takes shape at Canisius College

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It's only been a few weeks since Catholic Health officials took over 25,000 square feet at the Canisius College science center. But already, the place is buzzing as technology workers and planners begin a \$135 million health information technology conversion for the health system.

Catholic Health announced in February that it would transition the entire system over to the Epic electronic health records (EHR) system, a move to boost quality and benefit patients. The process is expected to be completed in early 2021.

Later phases in the EHR project will give physicians at Catholic Medical Partners sites the opportunity to switch to Epic and join the larger network.

The early phases, however, are underway with groundwork, scope and direction nearly complete, including examining clinical operational revenue cycle and work flow. Dr. [Michael Galang](#), senior vice president and chief information officer, said the team has worked closely with Epic specialists, drawing in best practices the tech company gleaned from the nation's top health systems.

"The good thing is they have overwhelmingly recommended those work flows that are part of their foundation system, a collection of the leading practices across all of their hundreds of customers," he said.

The next phase began Sept. 3 and focuses on adoption and configuration, followed by testing next spring, then training and deployment in late fall 2020. That's where the space at Canisius will come in handy, offering flexible workspaces for the IT team, as well as training space for teams throughout Catholic Health that will have to learn how to use the new system. There's also space for Canisius students, who will have opportunities to intern and work with the type of systems they'll use in the real world after graduation.

Galang said that's especially important for the future health care workforce. He was a family medicine physician and early adopter of EHR technology before assuming administrative duties at the system.

"I think it will really create some intriguing opportunities," he said. "I really see this as a venue for undergrads in particular majors and graduate students to have this venue to learn, whether it's health information technology or data analytics and even some clinician and business intelligence."

Though the transition will be a massive effort, Galang said the workforce and senior leadership and clinicians recognize how a fully integrated EHR platform will benefit patients and practitioners through better work flow and efficiency.

"All of those things come with a system that is one versus disparate systems trying to talk to each other," he said. "Even though it's going to create a lot of change, we're really open and embracing the changes to ultimately improve the care of our patients."



JOED VIERA

Dr. Michael Galang leads the \$135 million EHR transition at Catholic Health from a home base at Canisius College.

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