## Experiencing The Benefits Of Electronic Health Records

(NAPSA)—One of the most frustrating experiences people have when they visit the doctor or are hospitalized is being asked to repeat their medical history over and over again every time a new person examines them. It's a common experience but not life threatening. But what if your name was similar to another patient's name and your charts got mixed up? What if someone simply couldn't read your doctor's notes?

Electronic health records (EHRs) are a promising solution for reducing medical errors and costs and improving patient safety, say health care experts.

For example, a health center called Urban Health Plan (UHP), Inc. provides much-needed health care to the underserved South Bronx neighborhood it has called home for 36 years. The clinic serves more than 37,000 patients who depend on the quality and consistency of care provided at this federally qualified health center.

"The implementation of our EHR system helped transform how we treat patients and track their outcomes," said Paloma Hernandez, president and CEO of Urban Health Plan, Inc. "EHRs help us work toward improving the health of the communities we serve and will go a long way in aiding the elimination of health care disparities."
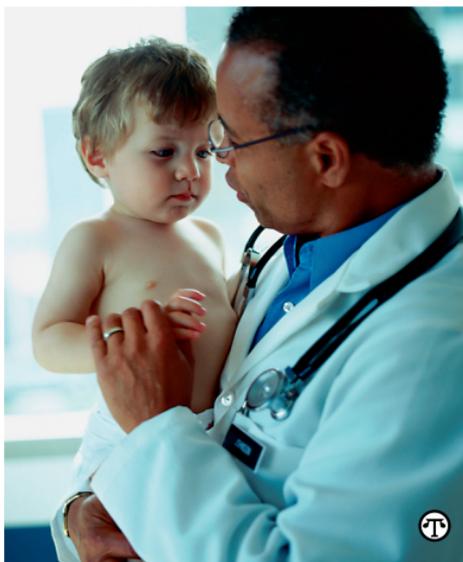
**Looking Into the Future**

Hernandez explains that the health center has 105 patients with similar surnames. Using state-of-the-art iris recognition technology helps avoid confusion. UHP patients simply look into a lens and the correct health record is pulled up on a screen.

**Financial Savings**

UHP saved money by:

• Eliminating the search for misplaced paper records that could take up to 75 hours of staff time each month;

• Converting storage space for paper records to a Health and Wellness Center for use by patients and staff;

• Reducing expenses for supplies, staff and storage and related items; and

• Expanding time spent with patients and seeing 35 percent more patients.

UHP's adoption of electronic health records in its network of clinics earned it the prestigious HIMSS Nicholas E. Davies Award of Excellence, in the community health organization category, for leadership in the implementation of electronic health record systems.

"The HIMSS Davies Award honors health care organizations that are leading the way in and improving patient care with the use of the electronic health record," said David Collins, HIMSS Director, Healthcare Information Systems.

For more information on the HIMSS Davies Awards of Excellence, go to www.himss.org/davies or call (804) 310-0615.