

provided with access to such patient summary data but not to patient data relating to the concluded encounter. Once the nurse's work is complete, the nurse files the patient chart (i.e., ends the contact), without the need for any further H&P report.

In a preferred embodiment, a cancel contact user interface selection is also available to a caregiver. When executed, the cancel contact selection deletes the various data structures created as a result of the current contact, and all other entries corresponding to that contact are deleted.

A caregiver request to switch from display of a first chart to display of a second chart is implemented by relinquishing control of the first chart so that it is available for use by other caregivers, if such caregiver had control of the first chart to begin with; ending the contact corresponding to the first chart, and invoking the pull chart component 201 to obtain access to the second chart.

From the above description, it will be apparent that the invention disclosed herein provides a novel and advantageous medical record management system and process with workflow management features. The foregoing discussion discloses and describes merely exemplary methods and embodiments of the present invention. As will be understood by those familiar with the art, the invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or essential characteristics thereof. Accordingly, the disclosure of the present invention is intended to be illustrative, but not limiting, of the scope of the invention, which is set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

**1.** A patient record system for recording and maintaining medical information for a patient, comprising:

- a first caregiver's terminal to allow a first caregiver to access the patient record system;
- a second caregiver's terminal to allow a second caregiver to access the patient record system;
- a patient record database having patient data, the patient record database being coupled to said first and second caregivers' terminals, the patient record database providing a first contact portion corresponding to access by the first caregiver to the patient record system and a second contact portion corresponding to access by the second caregiver to the patient record system, the patient record database selectively providing access to the patient data from one of the first and second caregiver's terminals responsive to a predetermined set of access rules.

**2.** A patient record system as in claim 1, wherein the predetermined set of access rules includes a rule selectively permitting access to a portion of the patient data responsive to the first caregiver having authorization for access to said portion of the patient data and responsive to the portion of data not being accessed by another caregiver.

**3.** A system as in claim 1, further comprising a patient chart workflow subsystem operatively coupled to said patient record database and said first and second caregiver's terminals, the patient chart workflow subsystem configured to allow the first caregiver to engage in a first patient encounter corresponding to a first patient while engaging in a second patient encounter corresponding to a second patient.

**4.** A system as in claim 3, wherein the patient chart workflow subsystem is further configured to allow said first caregiver to open a plurality of encounters for a plurality of patients, upon commencing a round of activities.

- 5.** A method of maintaining a patient record, comprising:
- providing a first caregiver with a terminal;
  - providing a second caregiver with a terminal; and

selectively permitting the first and second caregivers, using said terminals, to access portions of patient data from a patient record database according to a predetermined set of access rules, the patient record database providing a first contact portion corresponding to access by the first caregiver to the patient record system and a second contact portion corresponding to access by the second caregiver to the patient record system.

**6.** A method as in claim 5, wherein the predetermined set of rules includes a rule selectively permitting access to said portions of the patient data when more than one caregiver seeks access to said portions of the patient data and responsive to caregiver authorization to access said portions of the patient data.

**7.** A method of maintaining patient records, comprising:

- providing a first caregiver with a first terminal;
- providing a second caregiver with a second terminal;
- creating encounter records for a plurality of patients; and
- selectively permitting the first and second caregivers, using said first and second terminals, to access portions of patient data corresponding to a subset of said plurality of patients from a patient record database according to a predetermined set of access rules, the encounter records including a first contact record corresponding to access by the first caregiver to the patient records and a second contact record corresponding to access by the second caregiver to the patient records.

**8.** A method as in claim 7, wherein said predetermined set of rules includes a rule permitting said first caregiver to access said portions for all of said plurality of patients for whom said first caregiver is authorized, other than ones of said patients for whom said second caregiver is accessing corresponding portions of said patient data.

**9.** A method as in claim 7, further comprising maintaining the patient record in a writeable mode permitting said first caregiver to transfer, to said second caregiver, access to said selected portions.

**10.** A method as in claim 7, further comprising sending a patient record from said first caregiver performing a first type of processing, to said second caregiver performing a second type of processing.

**11.** A method as in claim 7, further comprising accessing a second record for a second patient while maintaining said patient record as an open patient chart.

**12.** A method as in claim 7, further comprising maintaining a list of said subset of patients.

**13.** A method of maintaining a patient record, comprising:

- providing a terminal; and

selectively permitting a plurality of caregivers, using said terminal, to access portions of patient data from a patient record database according to a predetermined set of access rules, the patient database providing a plurality of encounter records, each corresponding to interaction with data for a particular patient, the encounter records further including a plurality of contacts, each corresponding to interaction with said data for said particular patient by one of said plurality of caregivers.

**14.** A method as in claim 13, further comprising:

- locking said terminal by a first one of said caregivers; and
- accessing said portions of patient data by a second one of said caregivers responsive to said second caregiver unlocking said terminal and said second caregiver having access privileges to said portions of patient data.