

Electronic Health Records/Electronic Medical Records: Practical Guidance for Physicians and Managers

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The Washington State Medical Association (WSMA) receives frequent inquiries from physicians' offices regarding Electronic Medical Records. To assist in that process, the WSMA has prepared the following guidance.

For the past several years, the use of information technology has been increasing in medical practices. According to the Medical Group Management Association, one in five medical practices now uses electronic medical records (EMRs) to store patient information.

With the implementation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), the health care industry is being driven into using more and more technology to increase efficiencies.

Switching to EMRs has many benefits and drawbacks that need to be considered before undertaking the transition. Here's a brief summary:

Benefits

- Reduction of Medical Record Storage Costs
- Improved Efficiency
- Reduction and Elimination of Transcription Costs
- Improve Chart Quality
- Improved Record Accessibility
- Controlled Access to Charts

Drawbacks

- Confidentiality
- Initial and Continual Cost of Implementation and Upgrades
- Transfer of Paper Charts

Points to Consider

Determining which option is right for your practice depends on many practical considerations. Here are some things to consider before implementing EMR in your medical practice.

- Confidentiality
- Can you afford EMR?
- What's the return on your investment?
- What features or benefits are important to your medical practice?
- Security and confidentiality of the system?
- Can you integrate your practice management system with your EMRs?
- Will your EMR system be able to grow and add capabilities?
- Is the EMR system compliant with relevant state and federal laws?
- Can you transfer data to other applications like Word, Excel, and Access?

Electronic Health Records: The Next Evolution

On July 1 of this year, Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced that the Department has asked two prestigious organizations, the Institute of Medicine and Health Level 7 (HL7), to design a standard for electronic health records (EHR). This fast-tracked project is to report to DHHS by September 1, 2003. This model and standards will be used in demonstration projects in the coming year and will have far reaching impact on the entire healthcare community, ranging from large enterprises to individual practices.

Developing an effective, universally accepted EHR model require input from the end users, those who manage the technology and information content, and those who will invest in its acquisition, implementation and maintenance. It is for this reason that the collaborating organizations are working to compile broad based input from users to support and strengthen the work of HL7, educate the industry, build consensus, and facilitate adoption.

The adoption of electronic health records is a critical step in the federal government's push toward universal healthcare computing and its pay-for-performance initiatives. This fast tracked project is slated for testing in 2004. Once fully implemented, a national standard for electronic health records will affect the entire health care community, including clinicians, public health agencies, hospitals, payers, researchers, suppliers, pharmacies, and most importantly, patients.

More information on this initiative can be located at www.whrcollabortive.org

Consultants

Some medical practices have engaged the services of private consultants to assist them in determining if they need to switch to EMRs and what EMR product would best suit their needs. We encourage you to at least make a preliminary exploration of EMR vendors and see what different systems offer. We have included a list of EMR vendors and consultants to assist you.

Camray Consulting Group
Attn: Patty Scwab
8714 E San Marino Dr.
Scottsdale, AZ 852588
(480) 951-1512

Email: camrayps@aol.com

Christiansen IT Law
Attn: John Christiansen, JD
2212 Queen Anne Ave. N #333
Seattle, WA 98109
(206) 301-9412

<http://home.comcast.net/~christiansenlaw/PublicHome.html>

Email: christiansenlaw@comcast.net

The EHR Group
Attn: Mike Uretz
700 NW Gilman Blvd Suite E293
Issaquah, WA 98027
(425) 434-7102

www.ehrgroup.com

Email: mikeu@ehrgroup.com

Maxwell IT
Attn: Tracy Maxwell
3218 30th Avenue West
Seattle, WA 98199
(206) 214-5965

www.maxwellit.com

Email: tracym@maxwellit.com

The Sobokta Group
Attn: Jeff Sobotka
1209 141st PI NE
Bellevue, WA 98007
(206) 321-0070 or (425) 653-3025

www.sobotkagroup.com

Email: Jeff@SobotkaGroup.com

Thomas & Associates Consulting
13462 456th PI SE
North Bend, WA 98045
(425) 888-4339

Email: HTConsulting@comcast.net

Another possible resource to explore is the national specialty societies and professional associations (e.g. MGMA and AAFP)

- American Academy of Family Physicians “Partners in Progress” – Business alliance with nine health information technology companies.
<http://www.aafp.org/x24906.xml>
- Medical Group Management Association – Health Care Consulting Group has a Information Technologies Expert. <http://www.mgma.com/consulting/>
- American Health Information Management Association – Has developed a task force to promote the migration from paper to an electronic health information infrastructure.
<http://www.ahima.org/infocenter/ehim/>

Note: The WSMA does *not* endorse any specific software package. Rather, we wish to ensure that clear, consistent and accurate guidance is available, so that physicians and their staff can appropriately traverse this process.

A4 Health Systems

5501 Dillard Drive
Cary, NC 27511
(888) 672-3282

Product: HealthMatics EMR
Website: www.a4healthsystems.com

AltaPoint Data Systems, LLC

1100 East South Union Park Avenue
Midvale, UT 84047
(888) 258-2552

Product: AltaPoint EMR
Website: www.altapoint.com/index.htm

American Medical Software

1180 South State Route 157
P.O. Box 236
Edwardsville IL 62025-0236
(800) 423-8836

Product: AMS Electronic Medical Records System
Website: www.americanmedical.com/index.html

Athenahealth, Inc.

311 Arsenal Street
Watertown, MA 02472
(253) 826-4236

Product: athenaClinicals
Website: <http://www.athenahealth.com/index.php>

ChartConnect, Inc.

300 East Chestnut Ave.
Yakima, WA 98901
(509) 457-3004

Product: ChartConnect EMR
ChartConnect ResultsManager
ChartConnect MedManager
ChartConnect CommunityManager
Website: www.chartconnect.com

Companion Technologies

PO Box 100102
Columbia, SC 29202-3102
(800) 999-0788

Product: Companion Electronic Medical Records
Website: www.companiontechnologies.com

GE Healthcare

8230 NE 125th CT
Kirkland, WA 98034
(206) 679-9537

Product: Centricity (Practice Management System and Electronic Medical Records)
Website: www.gehealthcare.com/usen/img_info_systems/centricity_clin_info/products/phyoffice.html

HealthCo Information Systems

9 Lake Bellevue, Suite 103
Bellevue, WA 98005
(425) 653-3144

Product: Logician (Practice Management System and Electronic Medical Records)

Website: www.healthcois.com

Horizon Medical Systems

16150 NE 85th St #212
Redmond, WA 98052
(425) 883-6588

Product: Eclipse OPEN

IDX Offices

40 IDX Drive
P.O. Box 1070
Burlington, VT 05402-1070
(802) 862-1022

Product: Group Works
Touch Works

Website: www.idx.com/groupcast/gc_cemr.asp

IMPAC Medical Systems, Inc.

100 West Evelyn Avenue
Mountain View, CA 94041
(650) 623-8800

Product: IMPAC EMR

Website: www.impact.com/index.html

McKesson Corporation

One Post Street
San Francisco, CA 94104-5296
(415) 983-8300

Product: Horizon Patient Folder

Website: www.mckesson.com/health_providers.html

MD Serve

4800 Sugar Grove Blvd.
Suite 200
Stafford, TX 77477
(281) 295-1500

Product: MD Serve EMR

Website: www.mdserve.com/v2/index.php

MedPlexus, Inc.

3130 De La Cruz Boulevard
Suite 136
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 878-6344

Product: MedPlexus Electronic Health Record

Website: www.medplexus.com

MedPlus, Inc.

4690 Parkway Drive
Mason, Ohio 45040
(513) 229-5500

Product: ChartMaxx

Website: www.medplus.com/home.htm

Misys Healthcare Systems, Inc.

8529 Six Forks Road
Raleigh, NC 27615
(800) 334-8534

Product: Misys EMR

Website: www.misyshealth.com

NextGen Healthcare Information Systems

795 Horsham Road, 2nd Floor
Horsham, PA 19044
(215) 657-7010

Product: NextGen EMR

Website: www.clinitec.com/index.asp

Physician Micro Systems, Inc.

Corporate Headquarters
2033 Sixth Avenue
Seattle WA, 98121
(800) 770-7674

Product: Practice Partner Patient Records

Website: www.pmsi.com/indexsm.htm

Siemens Medical Solutions

1300, 114th Avenue SE
Suites 232, 240
Bellevue, WA 98004-6943
(425) 637-1707

Product: Online Medical Record

Website: www.siemens.com

VantageMed Seattle

530 Industry Drive
Building 4
Seattle, Washington 98188
(206) 575-3400

Product: Chart Keeper
Website: www.vantagemed.com

VitalWorks Inc.

239 Ethan Allen Highway
Ridgefield, CT 06877
(800) 278-0037

Product: Intuition™ EMR
Ingenuity™ EMR
Website: www.vitalworks.com/index.html

Web MD Practice Services (Medical Manager)

33400 9th Ave. S Suite #200
Federal Way, WA 98003
(253) 874-0245

Product: Medical Manager
Website: www.medicalmanager.com