Avoiding Pitfalls in Selecting An Electronic Medical Record System

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Disclosures

- I have no relevant disclosures related to this presentation.

Outline

- Background on EMR
- EMR Options
  - Web based
  - Server based
  - Desktop based
- Cost models
  - Free
  - One time fee with maintenance
  - Monthly

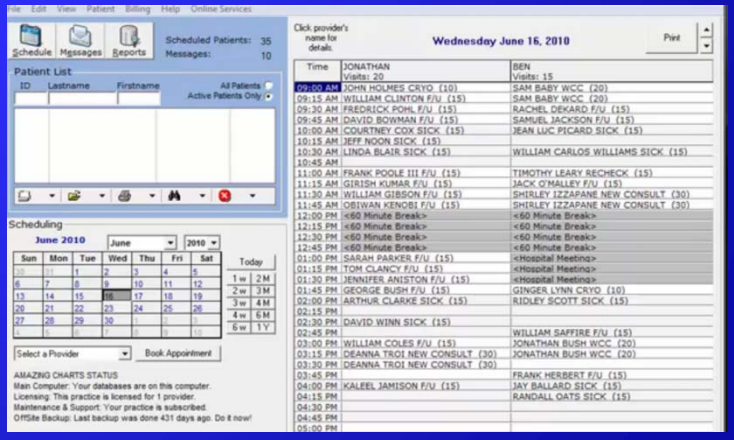
Outline

- EMR Pitfalls
  - Cost
  - Buy-in from staff
  - Privacy
  - Speed/Volume
  - Legal

What is an EMR?

- Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) are computerized records of patients' clinical, demographic, and administrative information

- EMRs have the following functions:
  - Capture patient data
  - Integrate with multiple data sources
  - Provide decision support
  - Patient charting
  - Order communications systems
  - Document and image management



Health Technology Review.com. 2012

EMR Objectives

- Complete and Accurate Patient Health Information
- Patient Care Coordination
- Encouraging Active Participation from Patients
- Reduce Medical Errors
- Provide Safer Care at Lower Costs

HealthIT. 2012.

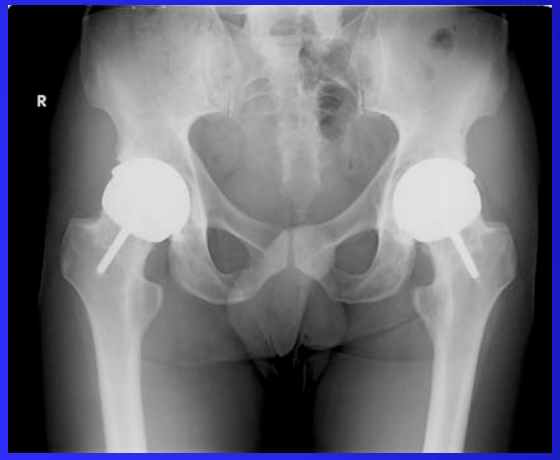
EMR Trends

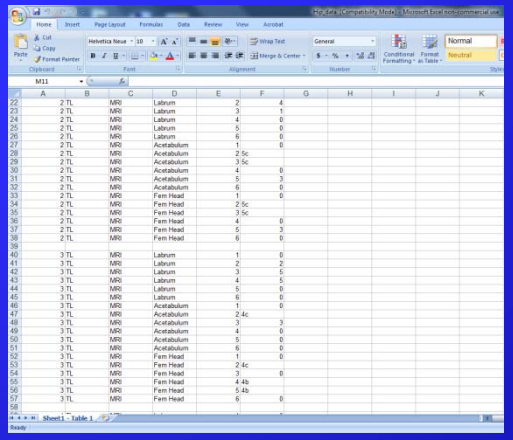
- An increasing number of physicians are using EMRs
- National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey
  - 34.8% of physicians used EMR in 2007
  - 50.7% in 2010

CDC. 2012.

Hospitals vs Physician's Offices

- Hospital EMR systems
  - Multiple physician visits
  - Labs
  - Radiography
  - Demographics
- Lack of integration





Physician’s offices

- Physicians office systems
  - Less expensive
  - Decrease use of paper
  - Ultimately allow communication across the entire health care system

Government EMR Mandate

- Goal for most physicians to use EMR by 2014
- $17 billion of incentives to physicians and hospitals by The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
- Loss of Medicare fees for physicians or hospitals who are not using EMRs by 2015

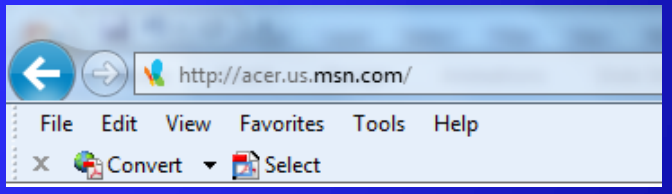
Blumenthal D. N Engl J Med. 360(15):1477–9. 200.

EMR Options

- Web based
  - Cloud computing based
  - Data does not reside in office
  - Continuously or intermittently backed up to remote site
  - Advantages
    - Safe from natural disasters
    - Less costly
    - Access from anywhere with a web connection

Web based

- Disadvantages
  - Where is the data?
  - Data transfer from system to system.
  - HIPAA secure but who is mining the patient data?
  - Potential delays based on internet connection
  - What if internet crashes?



EMR Options

- Server based
  - Server vs. client
  - May be ideal for a moderate sized office
  - Usually requires specific IT support
  - Client computers can be attached either through wired or wireless connections.

EMR Options

- Desktop based
  - A desktop computer can act as a server
  - The EMR database resides on the desktop
  - Most likely for a very small office

Client/Server Systems

- Allow for faster access to data
- Avoid internet traffic issues
- No internet needed
- Require remote data backup
- Online remote access
  - Logmein.com
  - Citrix

Data entry

- Typing
- Templates and drop down menus
- Dictation
- Voice Recognition

DRAGON NATURALLYSPEAKING

EMR/Practice Management

- Billing
  - Difference between EMR and practice management
  - Practice management
    - Scheduling
    - Billing
    - Office flow
    - Claim processing

EMR Pitfalls

- Cost
- Buy-in from staff
- Privacy
- Speed/Volume
- Legal

Cost Models

- Free
- One time +/- service agreement
- Monthly

Cost

- EMR prices range from zero to $millions depending on size
- US EMR market grew to $15.7 billion in 2010
- Expected to reach $25 billion by 2015
- For small offices, best to start off with the system that lets you “ease into the EMR concept”
- Avoid large up-front expenses

Cost

- High price EMRs are typically financed
  - Major pitfall can occur if the office buys from a third party company rather than the manufacturer
  - Financing is through a bank rather than through the seller.
  - If things fall apart, office is on the hook for the full amount

READ THE CONTRACT!

- EHR may not have the required certification for “meaningful use”
- An EHR that meets criteria does not necessarily mean the practice will meet the criteria
- Time and support
- Deadlines
- Careful with contract details
  - Licensing fees

Top 5 EHR Contract Pitfalls Identified http://www.emrandhipaa.com/emr-and-hipaa/2011/07/22/top-5-ehr-contract-pitfalls-identified-guest-post/

Free!

- Practice Fusion
  - Has been in existence since 2005
  - Free to use
    - Email address needed
  - Cloud based
  - How is this possible?
    - Advertisements, data mining
    - Compliant with meaningful use

Buy-In

- A new EMR in the setting of a previous paper based office can be a source of anxiety
  - Test run
  - Site visit
  - Chat group
  - Involve staff
  - Lighten up the schedule!

Buy-In

- Baby steps
  - Start off with the demographic info and notes
  - Then incorporate other facets of EMR
    - Labs
    - Xray results
    - Intraoffice ordering
    - Messaging

Privacy

- HIPAA: Health Insurance Privacy and Portability Act
- Privacy Rule
  - Regulates the safety and control of Protected Health Information (PHI)
- EMRs provide an excellent method to safeguard info due to password protection

Privacy

- Risk of data loss
  - Laptops
  - Flash Disks
  - Passwords

Office Flow/Speed

- Typically, EMRs initially can lead to some degree of loss of speed
- Overall, the benefit of improved documentation and quality outweighs the decreased number of patients
  - Eventually

Office Flow/Speed

- Ancillary staff
- Efficiency of ordering
- Improved access to data (no more thick charts)

Legal Issues

- Concern about medical-legal risks
  - Loss of data
  - Malpractice liability

Data Loss

- Loss of a laptop or portable device can lead to a massive breach
  - Important to know state regulations regarding informing patients
  - Loss of out of state patient data
  - Conflicts with investigating agency

Malpractice Liability

- Liability for alleged “alteration of records”
- Many cases focused on reviewing electronic data
- Potential fodder for attorneys to review:
  - Timing of response to lab values
  - Use of external references
  - Inter office messaging
- Tort reform for EMRs is needed

Legal risks of going paperless, By Alicia Gallegos, amednews staff. Posted March 5,. 2012

Summary

- Brief introduction of EMR
- Choices available for EMRs
- Pitfalls associated with incorporating an EMR into your practice

Thank you!

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