# 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 Cost models
- EMR Options
  - Web based
  - Server based
  - Desktop based

- 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



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	09:30 AM FREDRICK POHL F/U (15)	RACHEL DEKARD F/U (15)
	09:45 AM DAVID BOWMAN F/U (15)	SAMUEL JACKSON F/U (15)
	10:00 AM COURTNEY COX SICK (15)	JEAN LUC PICARD SICK (15)
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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

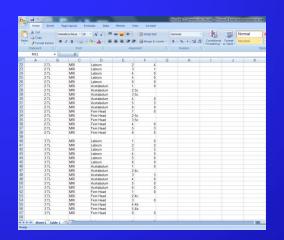
  34.8% of physicians used EMR in 2007
  50.7% in 2010

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





#### **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





- 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-andhipaa/2011/07/22/top-5-ehr-contract-pitfalls-identified-guest-post/







- 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

### Summary

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

Thank you!

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