

Seeing Past the “Smoke and Mirrors” When Evaluating EMR/EHR Vendors



Choosing an Electronic Medical Records (EMR) or Electronic Health Records (EHR) system for your office can be one of the most beneficial things you do for your practice. Unfortunately, buying the wrong EMR system can be disastrous and costly.

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All software is not created equal. It's important to see past the “smoke and mirrors” and focus on your future goals, not just your immediate needs. For example, a low-end EMR is typically a packaged product with limited functionality and little or no training and customer support. A high-end EMR offers customized solutions that are configured to your practice using a high quality reliable technical platform, with ongoing access to customer support and training.

Look for an EMR system that works the way you do business. Ask yourself if EMR can make your practice a success by increasing staff productivity, improving patient care and satisfaction, and increasing your revenue. Choose a company that will grow with you and help you become successful!

Listed below are critical success factors to consider when evaluating and selecting your EMR vendor.

- ✓ Factor in the stability, size and resources of the company, such as: years in business, number of installations, number of employees devoted to software development and support, focus is on the

eye care industry, and attends tradeshow. The company should devote at least 50% or more of its resources to software development, support and training.

- ✓ Is the software functional and flexible? You EMR system should have a flexible configuration that will allow you to customize your workflows, so it reflects your clinical needs, personal preferences and business requirements. Pay attention to how easy and fast it is to get data in and out of the software.
- ✓ Was the EMR software developed from input from eye care professionals?
- ✓ Does the company deliver value-added updates and new interfaces and features — not just bug fixes?
- ✓ Is the company compliant and proactive with maintaining the latest EMR/EHR standards, trends and guidelines, such as EHR certification for meaningful use, e-prescribing mandates, and the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) that focus on delivering higher quality care?

- ✓ Is the EMR software approved and certified by most major insurance companies and clearinghouses? It's important that you be able to submit EDI claims in HIPAA compliant formats, including the CMS 1500 Claim Form that incorporates the National Provider Identifier.
- ✓ Will the software improve your E&M coding accuracy by reviewing EMR data then instantly suggesting a billing level that is compliant with Medicare's E&M coding?
- ✓ Does the software analyze patient exam data and select accurate diagnosis and procedure codes based on your findings?
- ✓ Does the system have a good report generator? Most programs have some type of reports already built into them, but they may not suit your individual needs. It's helpful to know what reports you would like to have before you buy a program so you can make sure your new EMR software is capable of producing them.
- ✓ Has the software company performed comprehensive data conversions? Your data is your most important asset.
- ✓ Does the company offer a complete deployment and in-depth training package, including reliable, ongoing technical support and a variety of training options?
- ✓ Does the vendor provide certified trainer(s) who will come to your practice and also offer a second follow-up training, in person, on more advanced questions that inevitably come up once you have the momentum going?
- ✓ Does the company provide written doctor testimonials or case studies? Interview at least five doctors who use the software.

Evaluating EMR Vendors Quick Tips:

- ✓ Select and implement an internal leadership team that will help you create a detailed EMR implementation plan.
- ✓ Define, document and review your existing workflow and all office processes to identify the areas you want to automate with EMR, before you meet with your EMR vendor.
- ✓ Visit at least one or two optometric practices that are using the software you are considering; meet with doctors or high-level users. Observe if the patient flow is smooth, how easy it is for the staff to use it, and the overall functionality of the practice.
- ✓ Schedule an online demonstration with a sales representative. After your online demonstration, ask for a demo CD that allows you to test drive the software and enter sample patient data.
- ✓ Get written, itemized quotes.

Free Practice Analysis

Ask First Insight how they can help you develop a plan of action, evaluate a return on your investment, and create a smooth-running paperless office with maximEyes practice management and EMR software.

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