



Implementing an EHR

Managing, Measuring & Meeting Expectations

In this white paper, we'll give a detailed account of what physicians and practice managers should expect when selecting and implementing an Electronic Health Record system into their practice.



Implementing an EHR

Making the Choice

Every EHR implementation should have one overarching goal: the EHR being implemented will increase practice profitability and efficiency. There is no point in spending the time necessary for an implementation if the system will not prove itself effective and thus eventually be abandoned. The decisions involved in an EHR implementation are emotional as well as financial. It takes time, it takes a lot of brainpower, and it requires full dedication to the process by the whole practice team. By far, the three most integral decisions revolve around leadership, technology and the vendor relationship.

Rallying the Troops

Look at your staff. No matter the size of your organization, running it is not easy. You should choose an EHR that will complement the people who will be using it. When an orchestra begins rehearsing a new symphony, there are discordant moments and doubts as to whether the piece will ever flow together to create the powerful, harmonious sounds sought by the composer and the audience. Physician practices that successfully implement and fully utilize an EHR know this experience well. Each practice needs strong in-house champions to conduct the process and dedicate themselves to the necessary training.

Implementation leaders must:

1. Review the EHR contract
2. Provide practice technology information to the vendor
3. Identify practice Super Users
4. Coordinate staff training
5. Lead efforts for patient communication and subscription



Put the FOCUS on YOUR PRACTICE

Physicians with an ownership stake in their practices were more likely than other physicians to think of EHR implementation as difficult or very difficult, according to the results of pre- and post-implementation surveys of physicians published Jan. 16 in the Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association.

Researchers surveyed 156 physicians in Massachusetts who completed a pre-implementation survey in 2005 and a post-implementation survey in 2009.

- 35% of physicians reported that implementation was very difficult.
- 54% reported that it was somewhat difficult.
- 12% reported that it was not difficult.
- 27% of practice staff reported that implementation was very difficult.

Conclusion:

EHR providers should focus on the needs of physician owners and recognize the importance of non-physician employees' role in implementation.

A note about budget concerns:

A pervasive myth in the health information technology industry is that implementing an EHR requires an outlay of thousands, if not tens of thousands of dollars, by the practice. The good news: For primary care physicians, this is not so. Hello Health is a no-cost electronic health record platform that includes practice management components that will earn new revenue for your practice, and increase revenue for primary care physicians.

The Vendor Relationship

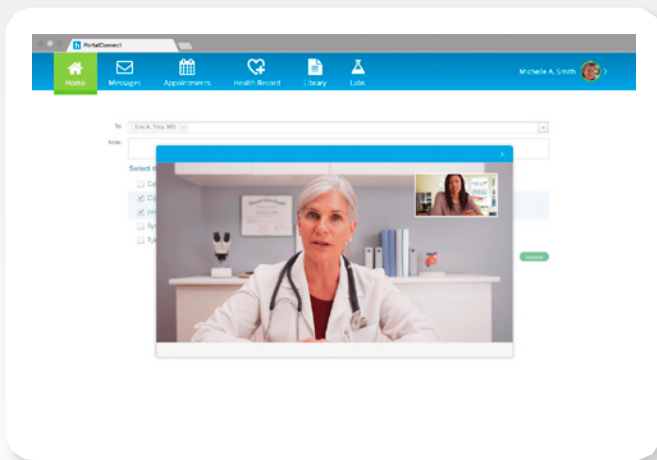
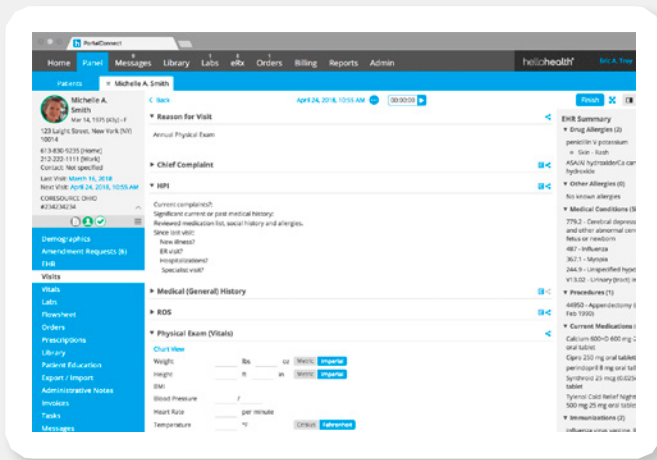
Putting a new EHR in place is a big deal. Your practice will be changing, and of course it is critical that these changes be for the better! A major component of the implementation's success will be determined by the selection of a true EHR technology **partner**. Your chosen vendor should possess knowledge and experience gained from implementations at practices of various sizes. Effective vendors will tailor implementations to the specific needs, size and staff of each practice, drawing on and tailoring best practices. Most importantly, you should trust that your vendor will provide help when called upon, stay current with industry needs and trends, and provide insight into this ever-evolving technology.

A trustworthy EHR partner will:

1. Learn the specific needs of your practice, how it works best and where it can improve
2. Build documentation templates based on your practice's existing workflow
3. Thoroughly investigate and provide expertise on existing hardware and equipment
4. Build your EHR platform to connect seamlessly to the labs and other resources used by your practice

Training: Learning the Ropes

Think of an EHR as a piece of medical equipment. If used correctly, it can improve the lives of your patients (and you). If you're not fully trained to use it, it will have the opposite effect. It would be irresponsible of any EHR vendor to fail to train a physician and a practice's staff on the multiple uses of an EHR. This is not a process that can be completed in one visit or with the help of a few online videos. An EHR implementation team should function as a partner over months and years as the product grows and the practice and patient awareness of the platform adjusts and adapts. **Look for a vendor who is willing to hold your hand through the process.**



INVESTED in Your SUCCESS

You should feel like your vendor is part of your family, because they are. Hello Health is in business to keep physicians independent by improving each practice's bottom line.

Our resources -- including revenue generating solutions for patient subscriptions, record requests, and specialist referrals -- are designed to work for you, and we don't get paid until you get paid.

You should expect your EHR partner to:

1. Conduct Super User trainings
2. Provide in-person, long-term training and documentation
3. Coordinate steps toward the EHR "Go Live" date
4. Provide on-going training and support throughout the EHR launch and after



"I think that doctors fear buying into software because once we've purchased the program we're left to fend for ourselves - but Hello Health has an excellent support system that prevents us from feeling that way. Our staff has not been overwhelmed with the transition, because Hello Health is taking most of the responsibility themselves."

Sue Lalla-Reddy, M.D.
Internal Medicine Fountain Valley, Calif.

A Note about Meaningful Use

A consideration affecting EHR adoption and configuration is the federal incentive reporting requirement for Meaningful Use. To comply with the requirements, organizations need to record a higher percentage of data elements than recorded in the past. Additionally, registration for the program and the reporting itself can be time consuming and confusing. If you have not begun attestation for Meaningful Use, consider an EHR designed to help you through that process.

Hello Health's Meaningful Use specialists are trained to remove as much of the attestation burden from physician practices as possible.

Our specialists:

1. Register your practice with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
2. Train staff and providers on procedures and documentation techniques to comply with MU
3. Monitor EHR usage to make sure each practice is meeting the MU requirements on deadline
4. Submit the required reports to CMS to ensure maximum incentive payment



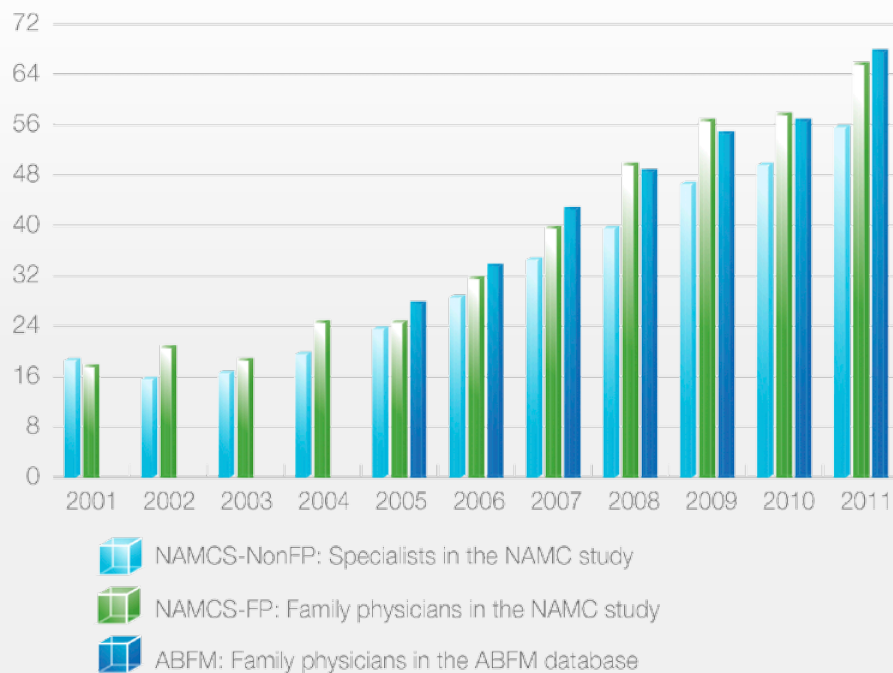
Adhering to these guidelines will provide a strong baseline as you make the necessary changes to your practice. This is a challenging and exciting time to be a primary care physician. According to a survey conducted by the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) and data from the Centers for Disease Control's National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS), we are now seeing a steady rise of EHR adoption by family physicians (FP) at a rate higher than other specialties. Both surveys show family physician adoption of any EMR at 68 percent. Extending the current trend through the end of 2013, EHR adoption by independent physicians is forecast at more than 80 percent.



As of 2015, nearly 9 in 10 (87%) of office-based physicians had adopted any EHR, over 3 in 4 (78%) had adopted a certified EHR and over half (54%) adopted a 'Basic EHR'.

Source: Health IT Dashboard

EMR Adoption by Family Physicians and Other Specialties (2001-2011)



Getting Patients Onboard

You know your patients best. They have been coming to you for years and trust your judgment in matters of their health. Patients want to continue seeing their primary care physician in the setting to which they have become accustomed. They want their doctors to stay in business. Along with that, as communication technology advances, they want to communicate with their PCPs in ways that are convenient to them. If your EHR has a patient portal, electronic patient/physician interaction can easily be a reality. Part of a successful EHR implementation is to illustrate to the patient population that this expanded relationship with their physician is worth paying for. Depending on the size of a practice, a subscription model charging a nominal monthly patient fee for access to your practice through a portal could increase practice revenue by tens of thousands of dollars a year.

To that end, a revenue-generating EHR should provide best practice guidance, training and support materials for patient communication and marketing including:

1. Brochures, posters and other print collateral
2. E-mail templates
3. FAQs
4. Training for face-to-face patient interaction about the new model



“The practice of medicine hasn’t changed much for me over the years, but the business has. Hello Health came to us with structured ideas of how they could transform our mess of a paper practice to an electronic one. They came in with enough people that the training felt individual. Everyone got to ask their questions.”

Dr. Richard Goldberg

Leeds and Goldberg, Family Medical Group of Manhattan New York, NY



About Hello Health

Hello Health provides the technology-enabled platform and services that allow practitioners to enhance patient engagement, all while automating their processes, increasing their revenue and taking control of their practice.

Through an intuitive and time-saving Electronic Health Record, we help practices chart effortlessly and communicate with their patients and care teams. Our Practice Management feature provides scheduling, customizable practice settings and integrated billing for a no-hassle way to manage daily activities. The Patient Portal allows patients to schedule appointments online, access their personal health record and truly get a feel for what today’s health care should be like.