IntakeQ

5 Hurdles EMR/EHR Technology Still Needs to Overcome

This is an extra resource to go along with the original article:
[What does the future of EMR/HER look like for your practice?](#)

Electronic records have helped revolutionize the way practices handle patient data, but they're far from perfect. In order for EMR/EHR systems to be truly effective, they will need to overcome a few of these important challenges.

1. Workflow

About 80% of physician burnout is due to workflow issues. Unlike other industries where automation has made workflow easier, EMR/EHR systems (in their current form) have been found in some cases to increase workload.

Requirements for things like data capture, quality, coding and billing are still a hassle for many practitioners using electronic records. For EMR/EHR to be effective in the future, it will need to streamline many of those processes to make data entry much easier.

2. Information exchange

Physicians and other healthcare providers in multiple specialties can also become frustrated when health information is not properly exchanged between EMR/EHRs. Even when practices are invested in EMR/EHRs, faxes and paper forms are still a common mode of communicating patient information between care settings.

While the future of healthcare may eliminate paper forms to a large degree (and the addition of a nationalized database may help), as it currently stands, many practices are still not fully digital.

3. Information overload

Some EMR/EHR products feature automatic email alerts to physicians, as well as various other communication methods. While communication is considered a "pro" for electronic records, it can be a "con" for some physicians who experience too many notifications throughout the day. For primary care physicians in particular, this can create a sense of information overload — the unceasing volume of messages reaching them has expanded beyond the number that they believe they can handle.

In order to streamline communication, EMR/EHR systems will need to be customizable and adaptable to the practitioner's (and patient's) preferred communication level.

4. Breaches, theft and unauthorized access

The number of patients affected by health data breaches is, unfortunately, still on the rise. The two largest contributing factors to data breaches are malware attacks (outside hackers) and insider theft.

While firewalls and other technology is being implemented to protect against malware, this still leaves practices vulnerable to their own employees. Whether someone accidentally shares patient information, or purposefully steals it, this can cause major HIPAA violations.
Proper training for the correct use of EMR/EHR software, as well as in-office safety protocols (never leaving sensitive documents on public computers, for example) will be necessary to avoid safety incidents.

5. Practitioner and staff training

There is also the issue of general undertraining when it comes to using EMR/EHR technology to its fullest capacity. Given the relative novelty of the EMR, hospital leaders may need to devote more time and effort to ensuring that physicians are well-trained to use it.
Physicians and staff should also be informed about compliance and legal risks of sharing, accessing and using EMR/EHR data. Practices may need to develop certain initiatives in EMR/EHR education to make sure employees are fully trained and compliant.