What is EMR and EHR?

The finite definition of EMR (electronic medical record) and EHR (electronic health record) is not a simple subject. The two terms in many cases are used interchangeably. It should be noted that in the case of the CMS (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services) incentive program the term EHR is used exclusively.

An electronic health record (EHR) is further defined as an evolving concept that systematically collects electronic health information about individual patients or population. It is a record in digital format that is capable of being shared across different health care settings, by being embedded in network-connected enterprise-wide information systems. Such records may include a whole range of data in comprehensive or summary form, including demographics, medical history, medication and allergies, immunization status, laboratory test results, radiology images, vital signs, personal stats like age and weight, and billing information.

Its purpose can be understood as a complete record of patient encounters that allows the automation and streamlining of the workflow in health care settings and increases safety through evidence-based decision support, quality management, and outcomes reporting.

The electronic medical record (EMR) can be defined as the legal patient record created in hospitals and ambulatory environments that is the data source for the EHR. It is important to note that an EHR is generated and maintained within an institution, such as a hospital, integrated delivery network, clinic, or physician office, to give patients, physicians and other health care providers, employers, and payers or insurers access to a patient's medical records across facilities.

Simply put EMR/EHR is a digital method to replace paper medical records, with enhanced patient care features that provide a method to exchange health information. The scope of improved patient care and overall cost saving that can be achieved by EMR/EHR technology has compelled the government to include a 19.2 billion dollar stimulus package to encourage the use of electronic medical records by physicians and hospitals. This time-sensitive incentive is rapidly changing the medical IT landscape.
WHERE, WHEN AND WHY TO BEGIN

There are compelling reasons to consider moving from paper medical records or upgrading an electronic system to a full pledged EMR/EHR. Most importantly, a successful EMR/EHR can bring to you and your practice - improvements in the quality of patient care, productivity, and revenue.

Improved Patient Care

- Overall improved chart quality
- Reduced medical errors (especially errors due to handwriting illegibility)
- Consolidated patient histories and electronic drug decision support enable physicians to more accurately prescribe and administer medication
- Enable the physician to electronically generate and transmit prescriptions and prescription-related information
- Electronic clinical decision support and best practices in the physician's hands at the point of care facilitate correct diagnoses
- Automatically generated patient reminders for preventive and follow-up care according to patient preferences.
- Expanded health promotion, prevention, and maintenance activities are possible
- Enhanced communication with patients

Improved Productivity

- Multiple user and location access to patient charts
- Time savings in locating, filing, and copying requested medical records
- Reduced paperwork and duplicate writing
- Prompt electronic billing and greater ease in invoicing and payment
- Enhanced communication

Increased Revenue

- Decreased lost revenue with accurate coding
- Elimination of medical record storage and transcription costs
- Huge reduction in chart materials purchased
- Increased services rendered due to health maintenance reminders
- Increased staff productivity
• Increased physician productivity that can translate to additional patients seen per day
• Better control of patient care costs by reducing redundancy of clinical services
• Office space savings from eliminated chart storage that can translate into billable space
• Tax incentives

If you qualify for the CMS incentives, the financial incentives to implement this technology are such that it would be prudent to act now before they lapse. For a good source for additional and detailed information, visit our Stimulus Reimbursement page.

The medical IT train has left the station and quite frankly, it is not if one adopts an EMR/EHR, it's when. That being said, this is not a simple process and it is a critical decision that requires the investment of time, resources, and money. There is no plug in and play solution. Any change in your practice operation of this magnitude will require a collective affirmation within your practice. For this reason, you and your staff need to be fully vested in the improvements that a successful EMR/EMR implementation can bring to your practice. While there are real challenges involved with an EMR/EHR adoption, such as initial reduced productivity, difficulty of learning new processes, the related costs, and uncertainty of qualification of CMS incentives, they are all dependent on making informed choices.

The research to determine the appropriate product is paramount to you achieving all the benefits that an EMR/EHR can provide as well as qualifying for CMS incentives. Assessing your current patient load, workflow, admin system, overall computer skills, and office IT infrastructure are the essential first steps. Examining the future goals for your practice is also a piece that you should consider.

A successful implementation depends on your choice of an EMR/EHR that best fit your practice's specialty, current and future operations.

The decisions that you make have far reaching ramifications for your practice. This type of investment can require a level of IT expertise that makes the hiring of an unbiased IT consulting company well-versed in EMR/EHR systems a good investment. They can assess your current environment, assist you to make informed choices, fully prepare your IT infrastructure for the EMR/EHR software implementation, and support that infrastructure.

From there you are in position to research the current certified EMR/EMR products on the market. While recommendations from other parties can be helpful to refine your search, remember that their experience is based on their own environment. EMR approved.com provides you with a full unbiased view of all certified EMR/EHR products. With the 3 step wizard, you can drill down to the products that are most relevant to your practice. The comparison chart will enable you to see the features of these products side by side and will allow you to delete and add to the comparison chart until you find the products that best fit for your needs. Once you have determined which EMR/EHR that you want to investigate more closely, EMRapproved.com will then facilitate your request to those companies for a demonstration of their EMR/EHR solution.
The **REVIEW QUIZ** for each course will help you to prepare for the final exam. Use your participant login code to take each review quiz. You are welcome to take each quiz multiple times to help you prepare. It is recommended that you take each quiz once at the end of the lesson and all of them again just prior to taking the final exam. Click button below to take the quiz for this lesson.

EMRapproved.com has numerous tools to help you to research the entire range of EMR/EHR subjects in one convenient location. ASKEMRPRO and all the links related to EMR/EHR topics provide a continually updated resource for you. The more knowledgeable you are the better choice you can make. If you have any questions regarding this selection of resources, you may contact our program team at (800) 671-1028 ext #33.