

# Questions and Answers to Selecting The Right EHR



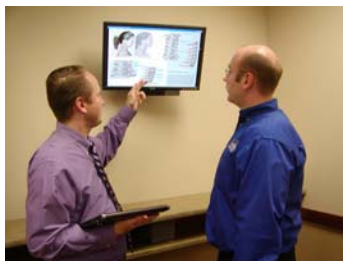
Q: How many seconds does it take to store one document page?

A: Anything more than 10 seconds is inefficient.

Q: Just as important as speed, how is the document categorized when being stored?

A: The EHR should be able to characterize a document as a radiology report, daily clinical note, insurance info, NP intake forms, etc. In addition, that EHR should also have subcategories available for more detailed filing. For example, within the radiology category there should be the availability for further categories such as plain film x-rays, digital x-ray, MRI, CT, bone density, etc.

Q: Are the storage categories customizable to your office?



A: Each DC practices differently and manages their office differently. You must be assured that you can create your own categories and basically create your own filing system within the EHR you purchase.

Q: Where are your documents stored on the PC or small-business server?

A: If the document is simply stored in a Windows-based file in your PC operating system such as "My Documents", then your EHR is not a true stand-alone records storage system. You must be assured of a separate operating system/software database that stores your data and documents outside of your Windows operating system. Failure to do so is a high risk for future disaster in records retrieval.

Q: How are your x-rays stored within the EHR?

A: With the eventual replacement of plain film x-rays with digital radiology, the cost savings of no film and processing chemicals will also improve efficiencies. In the meantime, doctors currently using some EHR systems are taking digital photographs of their plain film x-rays or scanning the plain film x-ray into their EHR. The method of how these images are stored has two ramifications. First, what is the quality of this stored image; and second, how much space does the image



occupy on the PC or server? If your EHR is located on a single PC and your practice has been established for several years, you will soon run out of storage space and also encounter a slower bogged down operating system. The design of your network and the EHR system storage bin is crucial for a smooth retrieval method.

Q: What options are available for sending or copying records from the EHR directly to other sources?

A: Be sure your EHR selection gives you multiple methods of transmitting documents by electronic fax immediately from your system, sending records by encrypted e-mail, burning to a CD or flash stick with encryption, or simply printing the records. An important feature to look for is the documentation of when and whom the documents were sent to and for what reason. These are requirements of HIPAA. If your EHR does not document these requirements for you, then you are back to a paper system of having to log these items manually. When it comes to transmitting x-rays, be sure your EHR has DICOM software compatibilities so that radiologists can receive diagnostic quality images. Even if you have a digital x-ray system and your EHR does not have DICOM software embedded within it, you would not be transmitting diagnostic quality x-ray images from the EHR.

Q: How easily can you select specific documents from a patient chart to be transmitted?

A: The EHR should be able to have a sophisticated organizational method to quickly select documents between certain dates, select documents by category, and in those clinics with more than one provider, you certainly want to be able to select documents by the provider, as well as options to select all documents.

Q: When your staff files a document into the EHR, can you flag the document to be reviewed by a specific doctor in the office?

A: When important documents are received such as outside radiology reports or specialist narratives, your staff would file the document into the appropriate patient EHR. You would also want the ability to have that document become immediately available to the appropriate provider within your office. Be sure that your EHR can direct that document to any provider anywhere in your office at the same time it is filed.

Q: When looking at a patient EHR chart, do you have to click open each document in order to view that document?

A: Be sure your EHR system can have a shortcut view of the document on the same screen as the listing of all the documents. Having to click back and forth from document to document in order to see what is exactly contained is time-consuming and inefficient. If your system does not provide an itemized listing of each document, in three to five years, you will have an organizational nightmare in searching for documents within a single patient chart.

Q: Who performs the installation and training on the electronic connections of your EHR?

A: It is crucial to have skilled network installers who know the EHR system and can connect your scanner, copiers, and your fax system directly into the EHR. With all the correct office systems talking to each other you can achieve a highly efficient office flow resulting in greater efficiencies, cost reductions, and more staff time to serve your patients.