

Implementation of Electronic Medical Records: How Healthcare Providers are Managing the Challenges of Going Digital

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Abstract

Electronic medical records (EMRs) are the newest form of documenting a patient's medical record. An EMR is a system that contains a patient's personal medical history, test results, dictations, and other medical and financial information. EMRs will improve healthcare by enhancing patient care, preventative health, and provider convenience and is an extreme improvement to an already highly technological healthcare corporation. The implementation 'wave' is not happening just because it is an improvement to healthcare, but it is also moving forward because it is required by the U.S. government. President Obama recently employed a stimulus package that will assist healthcare establishments with startup of electronic medical records. Along with the great improvements and advantages come inconveniences, challenges, and high costs. For large hospitals, EMR deployments can cost the organization millions of dollars; hospitals can spend from \$25,000 to \$60,000 per physician to deploy a system. EMR deployment is a public policy challenge with the federal government possibly spending more than \$20 billion in stimulus funds to reimburse providers for EMR implementations. EMR system implementations are like any business process reengineering project because they cause many challenges. Employees are not always accepting of change and managing change effectively is critical to successful implementation of any new technology. Additionally, new electronic technologies increase privacy issues while at the same time healthcare facilities are becoming stricter with confidentiality. Electronic medical record implementation is complex, but the benefits of organization and improved healthcare outweigh the minor setbacks. In this study, data was gathered from two healthcare facilities through interviews of the leaders of the EMR implementation process at each facility. Trade journals and EMR vendor information was also explored. The goal was to explore the phenomenon of the EMR implementation in this short term research project.