

OmniMD EHR

Choosing an EHR

Important Questions to Ask the Vendor, and Yourself

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Whether your practice wants to move from paper to electronic health records (EHR) or you are looking to replace an EHR or electronic medical record (EMR) system that doesn't meet your practice's needs, choosing new software is a process fraught with pitfalls. Who can you trust? How do you decide, with hundreds of software companies vying for your attention?

Define Your Practice's Needs and Goals

Adoption of electronic health records by office-based (ambulatory) physicians in the U.S. increased from 18% in 2001 to 57% in 2011, according to data from the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey. More than 50% of physicians intended to apply for meaningful use incentives. (1)

A recent survey of nearly 17,000 active EHR users by Black Book Rankings revealed that one out of six medical practices may switch to a different EHR by the end of 2013. The researchers interviewed 500 of the respondents, and found that EHR users blame themselves for picking the wrong health record software. Of the 500 interviewed, 79 said their practice did not adequately assess their needs before choosing a platform. (2)

HealthIT.gov recommends assessing your practice's readiness, including your goals, needs and financial and technical readiness.

- Are clinical workflows mapped out and well understood?
- Do you have access to high-speed internet connectivity?
- How much can your practice afford to spend on implementation, training and maintenance?
Is your staff computer-literate?
- Does the practice have specialty-specific needs?(3)
- Do you have any legacy systems that need to be integrated? Or can you start from scratch?
How will you migrate your paper records or previous EHR files to the new software?
- Do you want to be responsible for data backup and software updates, or would you rather have the vendor be responsible for system maintenance?

Other questions involve how your providers do their charting.

- Does your staff use (or want to use) mobile devices?
- Do your doctors like to dictate their notes?

These questions are essential to consider as a basis for your planning. Then your short-term and long-term goals must be defined.

- Does your practice intend to, or has it already, qualified for Meaningful Use incentives?

- How important is the ability to share information easily and securely with other doctors and systems? Do you plan to add more providers?
- Do you plan to add more locations in the future?

Each of these goals will drive specific decisions and narrow the choices.

Questions for Vendors: Meaningful Use

In order to qualify and attest for Meaningful Use incentives under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), providers must use an EHR certified by CCHIT. That is only the first step, however. Providers must use a certified EHR in a meaningful manner, including e-prescribing, must use a certified EHR that can accommodate the electronic exchange of health information to improve the quality of healthcare and must submit information on clinical quality measures, as chosen by the Health and Human Services Secretary, for the reporting period.

Meaningful Use is to be met in three stages over the course of five years. Stage 1 began in 2011-2012; final criteria for Stage 2 were published in September 2012, to go into effect in 2014. Inherent to reporting for Meaningful Use in Stage 2 are clinical quality measures (CQMs). Forty-four CQMs have been identified thus far, with a total of 64 to be incorporated eventually. (4)

Here are essential questions to ask an EHR vendor about their Meaningful Use capability:

- Is your EHR CCHIT-certified as a complete EHR? Is it Meaningful Use ready?
- Are you committed to meeting Stage 2 needs?
- Can your EHR accommodate the electronic exchange of health information? Is it able to communicate with other systems and/or interfaces?
- Has your EHR received certification for clinical quality measures? How many? Are they ones which are relevant to my practice?
- Does the EHR include a patient portal?

Questions for Vendors: Ease of Implementation and Use

Of course, no EHR vendor will say, "My EHR is really difficult to use." It has been documented that use of EHRs-perhaps the wrong EHRs-can slow clinical workflow. Implementing any system involves a learning curve, but some EHRs are more difficult than others. There are ways to get the information to help you make such an important decision. Ask:

- Is your EHR fully integrated with a practice management or revenue cycle management system? How long does it take to implement the EHR?
- What kind of training do you offer? Do you charge for training?
- How long does it usually take for a practice to learn to use the system?
- What kind of support do you offer?

- Do you have customized templates for my specialty?
- How will your EHR affect our clinical workflow?
- Can I access the EHR from the internet?
- Can we use smartphones or tablets to access the EHR?
- Do you support dictation?
- May I see a demonstration, specific to my specialty?
- Could I talk to one of your clients?

Questions for Vendors: Stability and Commitment

The ambulatory EHR industry has experienced a number of mergers and acquisitions in recent years and some popular products have been discontinued. In other cases, some companies recently have entered the field with newly developed products and business models.

Here are some questions for vendors, which you may also want to research on their websites:

- How long have you been in business?
- How many employees do you have?
- Are you investing in product development?
- Will you make the deadlines for ICD-10?
- Are you committed to this product (if the vendor has multiple products/versions)? Will you guarantee your product or service?

Why OmniMD EHR™ is the Right Choice for Your Practice

Our roots are in medical software. Our product managers are physicians. At OmniMD, we are committed to providing high-quality, integrated electronic health records and revenue cycle management solutions to the medical community, and have been for more than 10 years.

- OmniMD's EHR is ONC-ATCB 2011/2012 Certified, Surescripts Certified, CCHIT® 2011 certified with a 5-star usability rating.
- OmniMD EHR received the Surescripts White Coat of Quality for 2012, meeting the highest standards for e-prescribing.
- It supports 34 medical specialties.
- More than 11,000 providers use our EHR.
- It is Meaningful Use ready and has received ONC-ATCB certification on all 44 clinical quality measures. We will be ready for Meaningful Use Stage 2 well before the deadline.
- OmniMD EHR is cloud-based (accessed through the internet) or enterprise. OmniEHR will be ready for ICD-10

