The Advantages Of Having A Connected EHR

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Most clinical providers are aware of the more common capacities of EHRs. However, there are many capacities that are being underused that can be of great assistance in providing safe care that avoids waste and identifies best practices. Electronic communication with providers outside of one's clinical setting, clinical decision support and improving the body of knowledge of best practices are three of the advanced capacities of modern EHRs.

More than half of all clinical providers now use an EHR at their site. While leaning to use the EHR is a challenge most providers agree that it improves the safety of care for patients. With the use of an EHR the problem of unreadable handwriting is eliminated. Thus, other clinicians in an office and also office staff have little difficulty understanding notes from a patient visit. Drop-downs in the office visit templates make communication more uniform and any notes added in text boxes are legible.

Another commonly recognized efficiency of EHRs is the features of e-prescribing. E-prescribing eliminates miscommunication between providers and pharmacies. It also increases office efficiency since fewer staff are involved in providing and communicating refills to pharmacies. If a patient is on multiple medications, then an EHR can alert a physician or nurse to dangerous interactions of a new prescription to existing prescriptions if all of a patient's medication data is entered into the EHR.

If a practice uses an EHR that is installed on hardware that is housed at the clinical site, then the staff at the site certainly have access to the data in the EHR. This may be the extent of the sharing of the data, though, especially if the clinical practice does not provide services at other sites. If a clinical service organization is spread across several sites, then the organization should have its EHRs interconnected across all of its sites. Connecting EHRs across several physical settings is not overly difficult and is much like intranets used by many businesses. If these connections are secure from outside breach then HIPAA compliance can be achieved. Of course, the challenges of connecting hardware and EHRs across multiple settings is eliminated if cloud EHRs are used.

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