

EHR Implementation Challenges

Anne E. Frunk

Advanced Health Care Information Management

Tennille Gifford MSN, RN, RN-BC, CPHIMS

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There can be many challenges changing from a paper-based data management system to electronic health record (EHR). One of the biggest challenges is the “people” component. Staff come from different backgrounds and have different points of view which can affect workflows, reporting and different levels of resistance. A great leader will have the skills to recognize people must be central to the overall implementation strategy (McCarthy & Eastman, 2010). These skills include great communication, active listening, focus on the benefits vs. blaming the users, presents a clear vision and establishes defined goals and accountability for the team. A strong leader will consider all factors, technical and human, unforeseen circumstances, delays and have a plan in place to address EHR issues long after go-live.

Once go-live is complete, you are not out of the woods. “...you need to dedicate the time and resources to constantly iterate, refine, and improve the utilization of the EMR over time, far beyond its installation and go-live. It’s a race without a finish line. Train, fund and plan accordingly—don’t short-change the investment!” In other words, recognize that you are not done at go-live; you’ve just started achieving technology adoption and changing behavior to get value from your EMR investment (McCarthy & Eastman, 2010). Leadership requires the foresight to plan ahead and support the organization and staff well into the future. The challenges faced can be more about response to people, relationships, and emotional intelligence than the project itself. A great leader will have qualities to move the project forward and address fears and resistance appropriately.

References

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