



## **3½ Reasons Why EMR's Will Benefit Your Patients**

Are you still undecided about purchasing an Electronic Medical Record (EMR)? When implemented correctly, EMR's can have a significant return on investment that will improve your bottom line. But, there is another major benefit: improved patient care. *Isn't patient care the reason you became a physician in the first place?*

EMR software has advanced significantly over previous versions that started appearing a decade or more ago and the reasons to use it have become more compelling over time:

### ***Reason 1 - Prescription Management***

As a physician, you undoubtedly prescribe many medications. How many times a day does a pharmacy call with a question about a prescription? CCHIT certified EMR's are all capable of ePrescribing, which allows you to electronically transfer prescriptions directly to your patients' pharmacies. No errors, no double entry, and most importantly to you, no calls from the pharmacy. An added bonus: if you are doing ePrescribing, the software will check other medications that the patient is taking to see if there are any potential harmful drug interactions – even if you didn't prescribe the other drugs.

How many times a day do your patients call for drug refills? Without an EMR, your staff is pulling charts, attaching sticky notes, placing charts on your desk to be reviewed later, filing charts in a seemingly endless cycle. With an EMR, all this takes place electronically, saving time and money and removing potential mistakes. For many physicians, managing prescriptions is the number one reason they install an EMR and it becomes the number one benefit as well.

### ***Reason 2 - Patient Communication***

So much has changed in the past several years regarding an EMR's ability to communicate with your patients. The Internet now allows for secure communication with your patients using the same level of security technology as online banking. Patients are able to request appointments, request prescription refills, get lab results, or check the status of their accounts and pay their bills, all securely and without leaving their homes (or tying up your phone lines!). Making communication with your patients easier will improve the quality of communications you and your staff have with your patients (you can focus on real problems rather than "administrivia"), which will lead to better care. Most importantly, it will be done efficiently, while decreasing the time it takes for you and your staff to do it.



**eVisits** – That’s right, eVisits. You may think that seeing a patient via the Internet is something that will happen in the future but it is here today. Best of all, some insurance companies are starting to pay for these services. Here’s how it works: Your patient goes to your website and enters a “chief complaint.” The software runs the patient through a series of questions. Each question is dependent on the answer(s) to the previous question(s). You can then respond with a treatment plan, ask more questions, schedule an appointment for the patient, or direct them to the hospital emergency room. Your patient pays a small co-pay and you can bill the insurance company for the eVisit.

### ***Reason 3 – Preventive Health Maintenance***

Do you know which of your diabetic patients hasn’t had an eye exam in the past year, which female patients are in need of mammograms, which patients are behind in their immunizations or which are taking drugs that have been recalled? Sure, you could have someone look through all your charts. That would be time consuming and you couldn’t check many conditions even if you could get your staff to search every chart. That’s where an EMR comes in.

When your patient makes an appointment or if you access a patient’s chart, today’s advanced software will notify you and/or your staff that that patient is overdue for a test or procedure. You can now make sure your patients have had all the tests and other diagnostic or treatment steps that have been recommended by standard guidelines. You will be able to catch potential issues earlier and increase the quality of care you provide. All those tests and procedures are billable as well, increasing revenue in your practice. You can even have your EMR search for patients overdue for particular tests and automatically print out letters to be mailed to them or have your staff follow up with phone calls.

### ***Reason 3 ½ - Peace of Mind***

All of these EMR benefits help you as a physician provide a higher level of care to your patients. With “pay for performance” initiatives already here, you can not only increase your revenue, but provide a higher standard of care to your patients.

### **Isn’t that why you became a physician in the first place?**

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