

Evaluating and Selecting an Electronic Medical Record System

A Guide for Small Physician Practices

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- ❑ This systematic, proven approach provides an effective understanding of the application and technology options available within the current market and a guide for selecting the best system to meet your needs for a successful transition to an EMR-based practice.
- ❑ Designed to be used by small physician practices as a hands-on guide throughout the planning, evaluation and system selection processes.
- ❑ Appendices include HIPAA information and resources, a technology and networking primer, worksheets, questionnaires and other tools to help guide your successful evaluation and selection process.

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Preface

The number, variety and complexity of EMR systems in today's market has made the search for a system quite complex and often intimidating for many physician practices. Too often physician practices "make the classic mistake of beginning with a product demonstration and following up with a site visit. While these two steps may seem like obvious starting points, they are not the right way to launch your search".¹ Instead, a careful process for defining the specific needs, priorities, technical abilities and budgets, and evaluating those vendors best aligned with these requirements and constraints, will allow your practice to move knowledgeably and confidently toward the selection of an EMR system that will work best in your unique practice environment.

This workbook is designed to be used as a hands-on guide by small physician practices in evaluating and selecting an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system. It will guide your practice through the processes of:

- ❑ Assessing its readiness to effectively move to an EMR system.
- ❑ Establishing a clear definition of goals for implementing an EMR system.
- ❑ Defining the critical functionality needed to reach its goals.
- ❑ Evaluating the available applications, technologies and support arrangements available to it.
- ❑ Confirming vendor claims through reference and site visit verification.
- ❑ Negotiating an effective contract for the best implementation and long-term vendor support.

Many helpful worksheet and checklist tools have been included in this workbook. They may be used "as-is" or customized to meet your specific needs. To obtain electronic versions of any worksheet via e-mail, send your name, contact information and e-mail address along with the name of the requested worksheet(s) to info@outlook-associates.com.

¹ Tips for Evaluating Electronic Medical Record Software
ACP Observer, The American College of Physicians: April 2004

About Outlook Associates

Outlook Associates was founded in 1991 with the goal of providing quality, ethical consulting services to health care organizations across the country. Our clients include physician practices, health plans, government institutions and non-profit agencies across the country. Our principal areas of expertise include information systems and technology, operations improvement and regulatory compliance and research. Our consultants are seasoned health care veterans with 15 to 30 years of real-world experience in all major segments of the industry including hospitals, health plans, medical groups, IPAs, system vendors and clearinghouses. They possess a thorough understanding of health care operations and systems and bring a practical approach to each engagement that leverages existing processes, procedures and tools. Over the years, Outlook Associates has helped physician practices:

- ❑ Evaluate, select, implement and effectively configure new Electronic Medical Record and Practice Management systems to meet immediate and long-term business goals.
- ❑ Identify ways to leverage existing information systems to maximize the return on current investments.
- ❑ Improve the accuracy, quality and timeliness of data used in making clinical, financial and other practice management.
- ❑ Assess HIPAA readiness, plan for compliance, develop and implement remediation strategies.
- ❑ Improve systems and operational processes, performance and accuracy to reduce costs and increase efficiency.
- ❑ Identify and help recover cash lost due to overlooked billing opportunities.

For more information, please contact:

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