TOP TEN FACTORS IN SUCCESSFUL EHR IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Select the Right Internal Leadership Team.** Formulate a multidisciplinary team consisting of physicians, nursing, IT, pharmacy, and administration that weeks biweekly to review progress—tracked on the EHR Implementation Action Plan tool included in this report—and make decisions with representatives from each operational and clinical departments as necessary.

2. **Communicate the “What’s in it For Me?”** Not all staff are equally motivated to learn new systems. The team needs to remind staff of the benefits and convenience of an EHR system. From the top down, it should be communicated that “we’re all in this together.” Keep staff involved in project progress, expectations, and timeframe of each phase in the project.

   From a physician perspective, emphasize benefits such as increased productivity, improved communication, and access to data, decrease in transcription, increased charge capture and more accurate billing.

3. **Analyze the Workflow.** Understanding the current workflow and ironing out any barriers to efficient processes now, will make documenting and understanding EHR workflow that much easier.

4. **Create Specific and Measureable Goals.** Through identifying current processes and future options, the team can more accurately set specific goals for desired outcomes. Each department director should have specific goals for their individual departments. Goals should be measurable, i.e. “to decrease patient throughput by 30 minutes” as compared to a goal of “making the department/Practice more efficient.”

5. **Develop a Strategy for Entering Existing Data.** A decision needs to be made on what portions of existing data are going to be included in the EHR, and how far back you will go. Once this decision is made, then a plan must be put in place that addresses how this information is getting into the new system.
   
a. How are old medications, problems, and allergies going to be added?

   b. Who will be responsible for entering the old information?

6. **Devote Sufficient Time to Training.** A comprehensive plan should be outlined beginning with a short overview of the system—the big picture and some details about the most often used features—this will yield familiarity with the system and will yield to more effective training sessions when learning the system in greater detail.
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7. **Create “Super Users”**. There should be one or two super users on different shifts in each department. The Super User should be a full time employee and will provide a high level of proficiency on the new system and be given the time, resources, and compensation to take on this role.

8. **Create an Ongoing Plan for Support**. After training, make sure everyone knows where to get answers. The process for getting help and the communication of that process should be completed prior to go live.

9. **Leave Time Buffers throughout the Day**. During the first day or two of go live, leave staff a buffer by scheduling a few less patients. This way if there are questions or issues it will not cause any major patient throughput problems, therefore resulting in less stress for the staff due to a normal learning curve that comes with new system implementation.

10. **Plan to Succeed and You Will!** Careful planning leads to successful execution. Switching from paper-based documentation to an EHR system is a significant change, and the complexities are easy to underestimate. By following steps 1 through 9 you are sure to result in achieving number 10.

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