



ECM is a vital tool for Healthcare Organizations

When a Healthcare organization begins the process of transitioning to an electronic medical record (EMR) system, it is not uncommon for other important information to be neglected. The paper based process of generating and managing medical records can be greatly improved, but often the full efficiencies of an EMR system are never fully realized because of the vast content that is created or received through associated business processes that fall outside of the medical record process. In addition, trailing documents or supplemental information, mostly paper, that should be a part of a medical record, is not captured into the EMR. This information typically accounts for about 20% to 30% of a complete medical record. In addition, related business processes that contain valuable content is usually stranded in information silos or is paper based and remains unassociated with the EMR. This critical data from outside of the EMR process requires healthcare workers to search multiple programs or areas to find the information they need to make decisions, which ultimately can impact patient care as well as have a negative financial impact on the healthcare organization.

This is where an Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system can solve the problem for healthcare enterprises. Many EMR System providers have partnered with third party software companies to offer a “bolt on” basic document management module for scanning and storing images, but are often in need of finding additional third party software to handle the related business processes described above. To solve this problem, healthcare organizations should strongly consider implementing an ECM System simultaneously with an EMR system. Below are six reasons why all healthcare organizations need an ECM with their EMR.

1. Comprehensive Patient Care: With an ECM integrated with your EMR, healthcare workers can have access to all content for comprehensive patient care (prescriptions, x rays, history). An ECM solution can be used in the clinical areas as well as in the administrative areas (AP, HR, Legal, PFS, etc.). All information systems can be tied together giving Healthcare workers a complete picture of patient records and other related documents.
2. Records Retention: Reduce risk and liability by applying proper records management principles. An ECM system will have the ability to apply records management principles for retention, audits and disposal. This will help organizations properly manage records rather than maintaining an ever-growing repository of records. In addition, the ability to find and control records being summoned for litigation will prove to be a valuable tool in protecting the organization. Other key records management functions include freezing records, assigning disposition, check-in/check-out and all the other requirements necessary for DoD 5015.2 compliance. Records retention can be applied to electronic records as well as physical records.
3. Legacy Records: Healthcare organizations typically move to an EMR system because of the inefficiencies of a paper based system. When this occurs, the legacy records are often neglected, largely because EMR systems do not have the ability to perform basic document imaging functions such as scanning and doing bulk (batch) imports. Some EMR system implement third party software to bridge the document imaging gap. We



agree that these legacy records need to be available through the EMR system, but rather than a band-aid solution it would be wise to implement an ECM system.

4. Achieve Compliance: An ECM System can provide a complete audit trail for HIPAA compliance allowing healthcare workers to access complete document history from viewing, printing, exporting, adding pages, etc. Any activity that happens with a medical record or any document is recorded in the ECMS audit trail, recording activity, time, date, user and notes. In addition to expanding access, an ECM also provides granular security, restricting unauthorized viewers from accessing protected information. An ECM can also be very valuable for organizations seeking JCAHO Certification.
5. Collaboration: Patient Care can be optimized by sharing information with multiple locations, whether that be multiple departments, multiple floors, multiple buildings or multiple addresses. So whether the patient is headed to pharmacy, radiology, specialty care or billing, the healthcare professional waiting to tend to them will be prepared with all of the necessary information right at their fingertips, updated and accessible.
6. All Content Regardless of Format: With an ECM System, there is no limit on the type of content that can be stored. Whether it is a scanned image, an email, audio, HL7 data, video, COLD files, text files, Microsoft Office documents, x-rays, electronic forms and more. All content, generated by multiple systems, both internally and externally, can be managed, secured and stored within an ECM system.

When you consider the vast complexity of healthcare organizations coupled with growing regulation, increasing litigation and the need to stay competitive, all healthcare organizations need to be aware that an Enterprise Content Management System is a vital tool to survive and thrive in the 21st century!

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