Optimizing Your EHR

consensus health™

A "necessary evil" is defined as something unpleasant that must be accepted in order to achieve a particular result. In healthcare, many would assign a similar definition to "Electronic Health Record." EHRs can be difficult, expensive, and time-consuming, yet they are essential to running an efficient practice. This necessary technology tool can either greatly inhibit a practice's productivity or, if implemented properly, can serve as a platform for success in today's demanding healthcare environment.

Here are a few tips to optimize your system and achieve better results from your EHR:

Utilize the Patient Portal
Patient portals can be powerful tools in boosting productivity. Depending on the software, patient portals allow patients to schedule their own appointments, fill out registration forms, access lab reports, review and pay bills, request medication refills, and more. Not only does this increase patient engagement, but it decreases your paperwork burden and gives you more time to focus on other tasks.

Leverage Secure Messaging
Secure electronic messaging can play an important role in improving patient access and promoting care coordination between visits. By facilitating electronic communication between providers and patients, the secure messaging function within your EHR serves as an efficient avenue for contacting patients. When appropriate, patients should be encouraged to send a message rather than leave a message on the phone.

Integrate Systems
Instead of using separate EHR and billing systems, invest in an interface to integrate the two. You will eliminate duplicate processes and reduce billing errors resulting from manual entry.

Create "Quick Text"
Documentation shortcuts can be created within your EHR to improve the movement of information. This function goes by several names—quick text, cloning, carrying forward—but it achieves the same result: a two or three letter-sequence of text automatically translates to a typed statement. This provides the ability to reuse previous documentation and save valuable time.

Work at the "Top of Your Credentials"
While it's important for staff at all levels to be engaged and well-versed in your EHR's functionality, it's equally important to leverage the varying skill sets that exist. If a physician within your practice is performing tasks that a medical assistant or receptionist can handle, workflows should be redesigned so that physicians can devote their time to delivering quality care instead of administrative duties.

Optimizing your EHR can lead to increased productivity and greater employee satisfaction. By making a few changes in how you utilize your EHR, you can better prepare your practice for the future. To learn how your practice could benefit from practice management, clinical best practices and a unified technology platform, as part of Consensus Health, please call (856) 762-2469 or email **info@consensushealth.com**.