5 EHR Replacement Best Practices for Providers to Follow

As reported last week by EHRIntelligence.com, the EHR replacement market may experience a 7 percent annual rise due to Stage 3 Meaningful Use requirements and increasing needs of the healthcare industry. As providers begin working with new vendors, it is vital to ensure that effective implementation strategies are utilized during the EHR replacement process.

The industry research company KLAS recently published a report called “Implementation Potholes 2015: How to Smooth Out the Ride,” which examines what vendors offer the easiest implementation procedures when providers choose the EHR replacement route. Additionally, the report outlines best practices that healthcare providers should consider adopting to make a smooth transition during EHR implementation. The five best practices to include when replacing an EHR system are outlined below.

1. Ensure a Safe Environment during EHR Implementation

When working with a vendor, it is vital to keep patient data and records safe and secure. When implementing new health IT systems, data security must be addressed and organization weaknesses and potential pitfalls should be discussed during the EHR replacement process.

2. Vendors Can’t Change Your Organization’s Culture

The Klas report stressed that vendors are unable to change the general attitude of a healthcare facility’s workforce. Focusing on change and healthcare reform is key for a smooth EHR implementation and transition to an improved system. Without a mindset for change and reform, EHR replacement will end up being ineffective and potentially dangerous throughout a medical care organization.

3. Decide on Effective Deadlines and Stick to Them
When it comes to an EHR implementation project, developing the correct timeline is key for avoiding potential pitfalls. Vendors can assist healthcare providers in creating this timeline and figuring out how certain deadlines during the EHR replacement project will affect how the organization functions. Additionally, it is important to understand that deadlines can be flexible if needed. It is much better to go live with a new system only when the healthcare organization is truly ready.

4. Don’t Forget the Past

Healthcare providers will need to consider their past failures and successes. This will assist both medical facility workforces and health IT vendors in seeing a more realistic vision for the future and setting achievable goals during different phases of EHR replacement. Also, this will help providers foresee potential errors and failures that could be on the horizon and address these issues before they occur.

5. Revolutionize the Healthcare Establishment from the Top

Both EHR implementation and staff training would benefit from the involvement of an organization’s executive team. The success of an EHR implementation could very well be dependent on how much the CEOs and CFOs of an organization assist in the EHR replacement efforts. Executives should consider participating in the training and testing of a new system. This could help ensure a smooth transition period for the rest of a healthcare organization’s staff.

By following the five best practices during EHR implementation, healthcare providers will be more successful in revolutionizing and transforming their establishment for better patient care.

By Vera Gruessner on July 14, 2015