Five ways EHRs improve healthcare delivery
Introduction

The onset of patient-centered care and value-based reimbursement has healthcare providers evaluating solutions for meeting new care standards, protecting patient information and maximizing resources. Seven years after incentives were introduced by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act to encourage adoption of electronic health record (EHR) systems, many organizations have just completed their initial installations. They are finding that these investments are just the tip of the iceberg.

Information security, analytics and ways to better engage with patient are driving transformational change. Health IT teams need to ensure that their EHR systems provide the most comprehensive, up-to-date patient information while supporting and unifying new workflows, disparate data sources and a mix of delivery methods.

According to a recent HIMSS survey, 71% of healthcare organizations cite getting more value out of their EHR investment as their #1 IT priority.

However, after spending millions of dollars investing in EHR systems, IT spending fatigue is starting to set in. Technologies that can streamline workflows and create tangible cost efficiencies are the next big targets. Enterprise mobility is high on the list as a key component to a healthy IT infrastructure. It provides a current, seamless exchange of information among clinicians – transforming how they communicate, collaborate and deliver quality patient care.

The benefits of electronic health record (EHR) systems

The Affordable Care Act resulted in an unprecedented population entering the healthcare system for the first time. As the “single source of truth” of patient data, EHR systems provide complete patient information and historical data so clinicians are better equipped to make treatment decisions quickly and safely.
5 Ways EHRs improve healthcare delivery

1. Access to critical data – anytime, anywhere

EHR systems provide quick access to patient records from inpatient and remote locations for more coordinated, efficient care. Clinical alerts, reminders and up-to-date medical information provide enhanced decision support.
Advanced healthcare technologies and practices have resulted in teams of healthcare interacting with patients including: primary care physicians, specialists, nurses and technicians. EHRs provide better integration and information exchange among care team members, and can also help to relay critical vital signs, manage chronic conditions remotely, and allow access to specialists for personalized care.

2 Improved care coordination

A qualified EHR not only keeps a record of a patient's medications or allergies, it also automatically checks for problems whenever a new medication is prescribed, and alerts clinician to potential conflicts. This results in fewer medication errors.

3 More accurate diagnostics
Increased workflow efficiencies and cost savings

The use of EHRs automates several time-consuming, paper-driven and labor-intensive tasks. With access to complete, accurate patient information, clinicians are less likely to order unnecessary or duplicate tests and medical procedures.

Better patient participation

With EHRs, healthcare providers can give patients full and accurate information about all of their medical evaluations. Providers can also manage appointment schedules electronically and exchange e-mails with their patients – opening up a productive dialogue with them about their care.

By leveraging EHRs, caregivers are starting to see significant benefits in physician workflow and patient related outcomes.

$5.1 billions wasted annually due to an average of 45 minutes per day in communication challenges.
Providers with an EHR report these results:

- **79%** note practice functions more efficiently
- **75%** receive lab results faster
- **70%** report enhances in data confidentiality

**Physician workflow**
- Accessed patient chart remotely: 74%
- Alerted to critical lab value: 50%
- Alerted to potential medication error: 41%
- Reminded to provide preventative care: 39%
- Reminded to provide care meeting clinical guidelines: 37%
- Identified needed lab tests: 28%
- Facilitated direct communication with patient: 25%

**Patient-related outcomes**
- Enhanced overall patient care: 74%
- Ordered more on-formulary medications: 41%
- Ordered fewer tests due to lab results availability: 29%

NOTES: Physicians with electronic health record (EHR) systems whose system or scope of work did not include a specified capability responded not applicable. These responses are included in the denominator for percentages. Data represent office-based physicians who reported having adopted EHR systems (55% of sample). The sample includes non-federal office-based physicians and excludes radiologists, anesthesiologists and pathologists. SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, Physician Workflow study, 2011
Clinical mobile devices can play a crucial element in improving care team communication. According to the 2015 HIMSS Mobile Technology Survey:

- **90%** use mobile devices to engage patients in their healthcare
- **69%** have used a mobile device to view patient information
- **36%** have used mobile technologies to collect data in the exam room

The use of mobile devices in hospitals and healthcare settings has become as ubiquitous as stethoscopes. Yet only sixty-seven percent of respondents reported that at least some portion of the information on a mobile device is uploaded into the organization’s electronic health record (EHR). Only **eight percent of respondents reported that their organization captures all data generated by mobile devices into their EHR.**

This lack of integration between mobile technology and EHRs can result in operational inefficiencies which can impact care coordination, patient outcomes and readmission rates. They can also hit a hospital’s bottom line. A recent study by the Ponemon Institute shows that healthcare professionals **waste an estimated 45 minutes per day due to communication challenges.** This translates to approximately $5.1 billion dollars wasted annually in healthcare.

Only **8%** of organizations capture all data generated by mobile devices into their EHR.
Accelerating your EHR investments – what’s next?

As Phase 1 of EHR implementation is nearing completion, IT departments are looking at ways to improve its use of data to keep patients healthy and transition to value-based payment contracts. They want to build tighter interoperability with the various healthcare systems and software, invest in analytics for enhanced decision support, and deploy new technologies to advance patient engagement and care. A recent Spok survey concurs with 78% of respondents citing improved physician-to-physician and nurse-to-physician communication as their top goals.

Tighter Interoperability
IT teams are being tasked with replacing excessively customized and expensive legacy systems with next-generation EHR solutions that are secure, mobile and cloud-based — providing physicians and care team members with immediate access to the information, resources and specialists they need to provide the best quality patient care.

Next-generation enterprise wireless mobility providers like Spectralink’s support this move, offering solutions that have been qualified and certified to work with your wireless infrastructure and communication platforms to improve mobility, productivity and responsiveness. In addition, broad application support allows care team members to improve communication and share critical information while on the move (alerts, secure text messaging, directory access).

“It is possible to have real-time, two-way, low-cost, standards-based connectivity that enables improved decision-making and assures safety at lower cost.”

- Michael M. E. Johns, MD, Founding chairman of the Center for Medical Interoperability, and William Stead, MD, chairman of the technical advisory committee of the Center for Medical Interoperability.
**Improved Analytics**

With limited time at the patient bedside, quick access to clinical information and apps gives caregivers the information they need instantly to make well-informed care decisions. Clinical mobile devices allow clinicians to capture and access the most immediate, relevant data at the bedside for real-time assessment of the patient across departments. This allows them to do the following activities:

- Diagnose and treat conditions
- Prescribe appropriate medications, dosages and instructions for administration
- Check for potential drug interactions
- Review recommended lab tests and collection methods

By capturing and accessing data in real-time from any location, clinicians can anticipate and address patient needs, which can impact patient satisfaction.

**Increased patient engagement**

Clinical mobile devices that are connected to a hospital’s EHR system can help clinicians manage administrative tasks more efficiently including:

- Viewing schedules
- Updating patient charts
- Prescribing medications
- Completing dictation, and speech to text/transcription

When integrated with the hospital’s EHR system, using a clinical mobile device to input data and update patient charts allows the clinician to focus more on the patient, without wasting valuable time entering information into a desktop or laptop.

78% respondents who cite improved physician-to-physician and nurse-to-physician communication as their top goals.
Lack of integration between mobile technology and EHRs can impact care coordination, patient outcomes and readmission rates.

Healthcare technology innovation
Spectralink works with leading healthcare application providers to improve communication and enhance clinical quality and safety. By understanding the types of communication flows and environments, we provide innovative healthcare mobility solutions that help caregivers respond to clinical events quickly, safely and confidently.


About Spectralink
Spectralink delivers secure, cost-effective mobile communication solutions that empower enterprises to streamline operations, increase their revenues and deliver a positive customer experience – each and every time. Since 1990, Spectralink has deployed millions of devices worldwide across the healthcare, retail, hospitality and manufacturing sectors – providing workers with the industry’s most efficient, in-building communications solutions.

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