Five Things Your EHR Should Do For You

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By Michelle Cooper, OD

I have been using an EHR solution for over five years. My office’s productivity and efficiency have dramatically improved since implementing EHR—I’m almost 100 percent paperless! Yes, it was a big change for my practice, but well worth it.

I started with a server-based EHR (ExamWRITER®) and moved to a cloud EHR (Eyefinity® EHR) solution two years ago. Moving to the cloud EHR involved some downtime, but the advantages of the cloud EHR far outweigh any temporary office disruption.

Here are five things that your EHR should be doing for you. If your EHR fails to meet these requirements, consider looking into other possibilities.

**Consistent Patient Charting**
My patient charts are much more clear, concise and consistent. This makes it easier for my staff and I to quickly review past visits and scan for the information we need.

Eyefinity EHR allows me to quickly move through the exam and ensures that I document all required data into the patient chart. Plus, the protocols feature ensures that exams are documented with our office’s preferred exam plans, procedures and follow-up details.

**Enhance Patient Experience**
You may wonder how an EHR can enhance patient experience. Let me tell you—it can make a huge difference. I have all of the patient’s past visit information and medical history at my fingertips, which makes patient management more efficient. For example, I can easily view all the IOP measurements for a glaucoma patient and see when the last OCT was performed. Or for a cataract patient, I can look at one screen and view past visual acuities (VAs) and refractions. This allows me to have all the
information needed to determine a treatment plan for each patient.

With my EHR, I use an iPad in the exam room. This allows me to connect with my patient face-to-face, making the visit more personal. I can quickly enter notes or pull up patient education materials to share with them when explaining a particular finding. In that sense, my EHR isn’t just a tool to keep patient records; it also helps me engage with my patients.

**Automatic, Accurate Diagnosis and Procedure Coding**

Auto-coding is so important with an EHR solution. There is a major difference in types of auto-coding. Eyefinity EHR has true, built-in auto-coding that codes based on my exam notes. It does not match ICD-9 codes to ICD-10 codes. EHRs that use look-up tools can code your exam incorrectly. You should ask your EHR vendor how their auto-coding works.

The transition to ICD-10 was easy. Our processes remained the same and our claims went through without a problem. And because Eyefinity EHR codes based on my exam notes, it ensures that my documentation supports the code in case of an audit.

**Customization**

As individuals and doctors, we all have our own way of performing and documenting an exam. Eyefinity EHR learns and adapts to the way I practice. It remembers my preferences and most used options, and serves those up, allowing me to practice the way I like to. And I can set up exactly how I want the exams to be documented through the protocols feature. This allows me to customize the EHR specifically to our office, which makes us more efficient.

**Doctor Collaboration**

Working with other doctors helps me provide the best care to my patients. There are many ways that an EHR solution can help you collaborate with doctors. The referral process in our EHR solution helps me easily fax or email a patient’s primary care physician or other healthcare provider. If I need to refer a patient, I can send the referral right from my iPad while I’m still with the patient. I also have the ability to see which medications other doctors are prescribing for a particular condition. This is extremely beneficial if you have a patient who is not responding to your usual medication.

EHR software can, and should be, used for so much more than just electronic health records. From automating processes to engaging with your patients, and most importantly, having all the patient information at your fingertips, EHR software can have a huge impact on your practice and your patients.

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