

Electronic health records



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In this paper this student will discuss the national mandate of electronic health records (EHR) and how this mandate is being implemented at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. Also discussed are how Cleveland Clinic is progressing to achieve EHR, and what challenges this brings to patient confidentiality and self-determination. Lastly this student will provide information on the benefits of EHR in healthcare.

According to Hunter & Terry (2005), "The electronic health record (EHR) is an evolving concept defined as a longitudinal collection of electronic health information about individual patients and populations. Primarily, it will be a mechanism for integrating health care information currently collected in both paper and electronic medical records (EMR) for the purpose of improving quality of care". (p. 1). The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), and the American Health Information Community (AHIC) were created to oversee the EHR mandate that was set in place by President George W. Bush in 2004 (Slumber, 2008, p. 7). This goal has now transitioned to our current President, Barack Obama, who also is setting the goal for the year 2014. Electronic health records are set to take place of traditional paper records with the help of this initiative. The ability to have every healthcare organization operating with electronic health records serves numerous benefits for not only patients but healthcare providers. Some of the benefits include, additional patient safety, ability to communicate and collaborate with other healthcare providers, and the longevity of electronic health records.

Patient safety is at the utmost importance to healthcare providers, and EHR enables providers to have an in-depth history of their patients, leading to

better care and treatment. Due to patients receiving care from many different health care providers, this can act as a barrier when trying to maintain a collaborative process. By adopting ERR this enables all providers to participate in the care of the patient. When discussing the longevity ERR serves in our society Tang, Ash, Bates, Overhang, Sands (2006), states " The 2005 Hurricane Strain disaster exposed the fragility of America's health information infrastructure.

When confronted by a hurricane, an avian flu pandemic, or a bioterrorism attack, the public needs to be able to depend on reliable access to their health information" (p, 127). If healthcare corporations adopt ERR, there will be no threat of patient medical records disappearing. After stating the goals of ERR, and the benefits it serves, this student will now discuss how ERR is being utilized at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. One could say that the Cleveland Clinic were innovators in ERR, being one of the first institutions to adopt ERR more than eleven years ago.

According to Cleveland Clinic (2012), ERR is " enabling physicians to actively collaborate and exchange information to ensure appropriate coordination of care throughout a patient's life". McCarthy has also been a large milestone in development as part of Cleveland Clinic's adoption of ERR. McCarthy gives patients access to medical records, test results, and physician notes through a portal on the internet that can be accessed at home online. McCarthy, Cleveland Clinic's secure, online patient-centered recording tool, connects patients to McCarthy gives to patients is the ability for them to participate in decisions and their care.

While analyzing Cleveland Clinics utilization and plans for ERR, this student was able to evaluate strengths and weaknesses. Some strengths of the Cleveland Clinics plans for ERR include their development and growth of the ERR system, the innovation developed into the current plan, and the ability to incorporate patients into their healthcare. Being that Cleveland Clinic was one of the first institutions to start the process of adopting ERR, they in return have the biggest ability to grow, and develop their system.

Cleveland Clinic has shown such innovation in their process that other institutions have sought help from them for development of their own system. In an article by the Plain Dealer (Silverman, 2013) the chief information officer at Glens Falls Hospital, Joan McCall stated " Our relationship with Cleveland Clinic will advance information technology best practices at SGF, and we will benefit y having access to a broad base of knowledge and the expertise of one of the country's premier health systems".

When Cleveland Clinic developed McCarthy, this plays a role in the patient self-determination act, being that the patients constantly have the ability to be informed about their healthcare, and to take part in any decision making. A weakness of the ERR system in place at the Cleveland Clinic includes the risk of confidentiality. Even though the ability to access health records online has numerous unifies, the ability that such records could become hacked always poses a risk.

The health records are protected by a surname and password through the Cleveland Clinic website. With all of the technological advances it seems as

though it is becoming easier and easier for unknown people to access personal information. This student believes that more precautions should be taken when a patient's confidentiality is at risk. This student also believes more information should be needed to access health records online, instead of just a surname and password that provides little security.

After reviewing the ERR mandate, and the benefits it serves to healthcare institutions, this student believes that if more institutions adopted this system it would ultimately give better patient care. Also after further research into Cleveland Clinics development of ERR, this student feels the growth of this system is endless. While there are some flaws to this system, with time ERR at Cleveland Clinic could ultimately become one of the nation's leaders that other institutions wish to learn from.