

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page. It features a stethoscope with a blue and silver color scheme, overlaid on a background of binary code (0s and 1s) and a grid pattern. A thick, dark blue curved line separates this graphic from the white text area.

Ensuring Effective Physician Engagement:

Five Tips for an EHR Implementation

A White Paper

April 2017

Introduction

Physician involvement and preparedness are among the strongest factors influencing the overall success or failure of an Electronic Health Record (EHR) implementation. Without robust physician engagement and adoption, hospital leadership cannot fully realize the value of their substantial investment in the new enterprise clinical system.

The following tips highlight the actions needed to successfully involve physician leadership from the early planning stages of the EHR implementation through post-go live optimization.

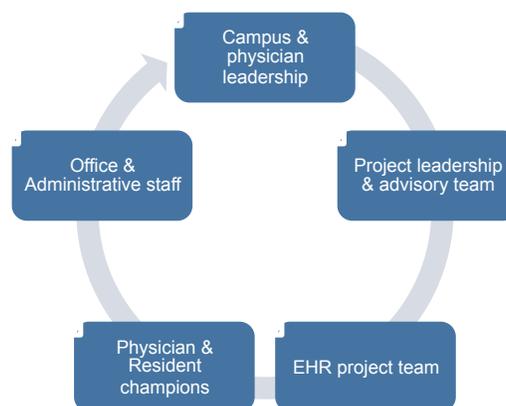
Tip #1: Identify Key Players

Physician recruitment involves several layers, beginning with physician leadership. Physician leaders have a strong interest and incentive to ensure that the organization's investment in its software solutions will create positive results for end users and patients. Identifying and engaging respected leaders, or "champions," enhances physician engagement across all levels. Because of their influence and visibility among their colleagues, physician leaders can be valuable in identifying additional physicians who would be effective champions.

The physician leadership group might include department chairs, chief quality officers, residents, hospital and staff committee members, and physician thought leaders. Members of clinical governing bodies and those with previous EHR experience often serve as champions because of their ability to promote change management among other hospital providers.

Seeking early leadership endorsement enhances physician engagement by setting a positive tone from the top, but the overall relationship is cyclical, as shown in Figure 1. Multiple constituencies within the organization can play an important role in promoting change and adoption, but the direction and support of physician leaders is most effective in encouraging fellow physicians and the entire clinical care team to follow suit.

Figure 1. Cycle of endorsement to enhance physician engagement



Tip #2: Develop Measurable Accountability

In many cases, hospital leadership is eager to promote EHR adoption, but the tools and structure to actually execute change are lacking. This can leave directors in a reactive state, trying to respond to frustrated providers.

Setting tangible, defined goals for physician leadership to achieve during the project lifecycle can help provide a degree of measurable accountability. For example, during a recent Impact Advisors engagement, the goals and responsibilities of the Physician Engagement Team included:

- Schedule strategy sessions to review progress, challenges and next steps for project leadership.
- Identify top volume physicians for the last 24 months (e.g., 100 or more encounters) for targeted training and personalization.
- Attend Champion Kick-off sessions to introduce project leadership and the Physician Engagement Team.
- Create partnership between the administration and the project Training Team to assist physicians with training requirements.
- Clearly define and communicate the roles and responsibilities to respective champions.
- Attend physician-centric meetings to communicate training expectations and monthly training statistics.
- Attend Physician Readiness Series (*see Tip #4*) with project leadership to communicate clinical workflow changes and address concerns.

Tip #3: Implement a Resident Task Force

Resident physicians are likely to have been exposed to EHRs during medical school or residency training. They can prove to be effective champions during both inpatient and ambulatory go-lives and should be assembled into a formal task force, complete with a legal contract and stipend, and typically overseen by the Chief Resident and project leadership.

Resident champions are identified by the Chief Resident and through recommendation from attending physicians. The Resident Task Force recruits incoming short and long-term residents during all stages of the project. Resident physician champions participate within the physician project leadership as domain experts. They provide leadership in their respective clinical specialties to facilitate decisions in their clinical content sub-groups.

When the Resident Task Force is initiated, resident champions are hosted by the Chief Medical Information Officer and Chief Resident for an introductory session. This includes a review of membership, roles and objectives, project timeline and immediate next steps. Commitment should not exceed 200 hours annually, with limited exceptions.

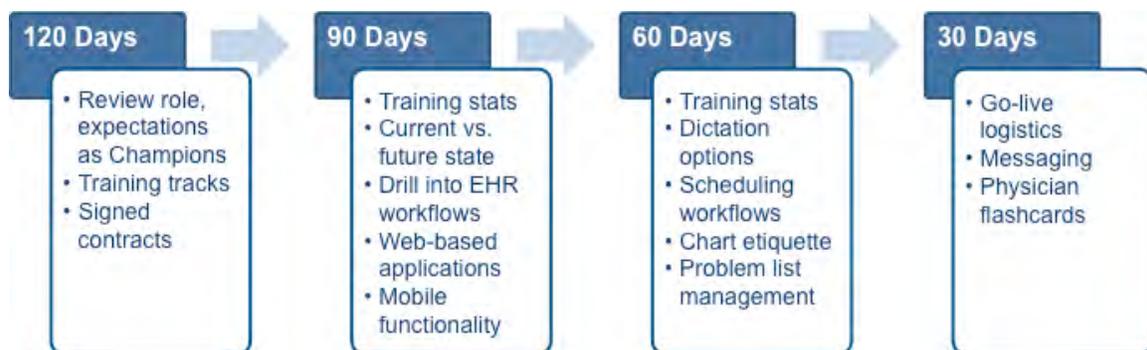
Throughout the project lifecycle, resident champions promote adoption in their respective clinical departments by:

- Supporting regular medical staff activities.
- Attending end-user classes, order set and clinical documentation build, and pilot testing.
- Assisting with physician classroom training.
- Providing one-on-one assistance to providers in personalization labs.
- Attending 30/60/90/120-Day Readiness Series (*see Tip #4*).
- Participating in clinical cutover and chart abstraction, transcribing problem lists and code status.
- Reporting critical physician issues to project leadership during go-live.
- Attending daily “lunch and learns” during go-live, hosted by the CMIO and Physician Engagement Team, to route physician challenges and map at-the-elbow support.

Tip #4: Host 30/60/90/120-Day Readiness Series

The Champion Readiness Series mirrors the project team’s Go-Live Readiness Assessment as an opportunity to disseminate critical messaging to target audiences at key milestones. Figure 2 shows the phased approach used to communicate the clinical workflow changes expected during an EHR implementation.

Figure 2. Phased communication of clinical workflow changes during EHR implementation



Tip #5: Support and Sustain

Monitoring physician champion involvement throughout the project lifecycle ensures engagement during the following three critical phases. This is a *collective effort* between project leadership, operations team members and application teams.

Pre-Live

- Review and validate order sets.
- Complete training and personalization.
- Disseminate messaging in service line and medical staff meetings.
- Contribute physician newsletter content to promote positive messaging.

Go-Live

- Round to assess go-live success, mitigate/de-escalate issues.
- Participate in daily executive briefings.
- Communicate and provide updates to providers and staff.
- Relay physician issues to command center.
- Provide at-the-elbow support.
- Assist with go-live resolution.

Post-Live

- Monitor reporting tools.
- Review best practice advisories.
- Recommend and review enhancements.
- Track and report on Meaningful Use progress.

The Bottom Line

Effective physician engagement requires commitment, participation and collaboration with the Physician Engagement Team on the part of hospital leadership and physician champions. Impact Advisors recommends using a project work plan with regular status reports to track engagement throughout the project lifecycle. Integrating training goals, Resident Task Force activities and the Champion Readiness Series into the work plan provides a central reference point for the project engagement teams. Following these critical steps facilitates key party involvement and successful provider adoption of the EHR.

About Impact Advisors

Impact Advisors provides high-value strategy and implementation services to help healthcare clients drive clinical and operational performance excellence through the use of technology. We partner with industry-leading organizations to identify and implement improvements in quality, safety and value. Our Associates are experienced professionals with deep domain expertise and a commitment to delivering results.

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