

Dermatology Coding Alert

Clip and Save: Ask the Right EHR Questions

Arm yourself with this handy list when you talk to vendors

Making sure you get concrete answers to all of your questions is critical when you're choosing an EHR software vendor and system.

Add the following questions to your list to ensure you're getting the best system for your practice:

- Is the entire EHR system HIPAA-compliant?
- How are upgrades handled? Are they included in the initial cost? How often are upgrades performed? Do they require much system downtime and a new version of the software? It's important to check on how often the company will perform upgrades, the cost of those upgrades and the service level of the provider.
- What training and follow-up support does the company provide to the office staff? How long does the vendor provide training? Do you get second-tier training after software is set up?
- What are the costs: initial, upgrade, customization, maintenance, integration, etc.?
- Does the system recognize all the procedure and diagnosis codes your practice uses?
- Can employees work on patient records at various locations? Does the EHR system support multiple offices and/or multiple providers?
- Are there multiple ways to access, view, organize and report on data stored in the system?
- Are labs, x-rays, and other types of information easy to manage and access?
- For a system that allows automatic E/M code calculations: Does it consider medical necessity in the calculation? If not, can a physician override a system if medical necessity doesn't support the calculated E/M code?

Bonus: See the chart on page 61 for a list of features you'll want to examine when choosing a specific EHR product.