Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Electronic Records: Ask These Questions Before Acquiring A New EMR System

Ease the transition with these tips.

You need to interview your potential vendors to gain the necessary information before choosing the most appropriate electronic medical record (EMR) system. Use this handy checklist to ensure you get the best system for your facility before you spend thousands:

· Is the entire EMR 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 EMR 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?