

## Health Information Compliance Alert

### Boom or Bust: Avoid a Botched EHR Implementation with This Expert Advice

Many enter the field of medicine with high hopes of engaging with the public on an altruistic level, helping patients overcome obstacles related to both their physical and mental health. While the technical healthcare boom has enriched the delivery of care, allowing better coordination between providers and making it easier to bill for services rendered with certified EHRs, the lengthy process of entering data has greatly impeded the long cherished relationship between doctor and patient.

Clunky systems, complicated upgrades, and a slow installation process often hamper your ability to offer the best care because, as the provider, you must be more focused on the documentation and EHR than the patient. This is why engaging the best certified vendor and EHR for your practice is essential to long-term success.

**Background.** In recent news, MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas reported 2016 financial losses to the tune of "\$266 million, a dramatic decline from a \$157 million gain the previous year," the Chron, the Houston Chronicle's online source, said in a Jan. 6, 2017 article. Officials at MD Anderson suggested that a difficult transition to a new EHR system in 2016 led to the significant fiscal demise and were also to blame for a declining workflow that impacted time spent with patients. Read the article here:

<http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/MD-Anderson-set-to-announce-layoffs-today-10837056.php>.

"Implementation is a critical step in EHR adoption, as demonstrated by MD Anderson Medical Center recently experiencing a challenging EHR implementation that lead to revenue loss and job cuts," **Richard Loomis, MD**, chief medical officer and vice president of Practice Fusion says. "The ability to implement quickly and get your staff up to speed is vital to ensuring a smooth transition for your practice."

He adds, "Cloud-based EHRs can prevent the headache of buying new hardware and installing a system, but any EHR you choose has to be easy to use to make training your staff quick and efficient. Get a clear understanding from the vendor on the implementation process and timeline."

Loomis recommends that you research vendor practices and ask prospective EHR vendors these important questions:

- How long will it take to get started?
- Will I be locked into any long-term commitments with a contract?
- Is training provided?
- Is there assistance for scanning paper files or transferring electronic files?
- What's the typical length of time for practices to get up and running with this EHR?

**Tip:** It's a good idea to do a quick audit of your practice EHR needs before implementing a new system. This will help you identify the best cloud-based products and vendor for your organization.