



End-User Adoption

By Jamie Alfano

Change management vital to implementations

Once the decision has been made to implement an Electronic Medical Record, how to reap the benefits of the new system through successful end-user adoption can be a daunting task. In every organization there will be physicians and staff both excited and concerned regarding the upcoming changes to their daily work lives. Using proven techniques involving training can help end users feel comfortable and assured that the new system will work well for them as well as their patients.

Before starting formal training of your new system, it is important to make sure your staff and physicians are ready to jump in feet first. Some organizations offer PC basics classes for all who would like to brush up on their skills before tackling new systems. It has been reported that users attending these classes were able to adapt to new systems more quickly than those who do not. Managers within each department should identify staff who may struggle with a new system and arrange for the supplementary training.

Employing trainers as an organization's first line of defense is an effective key to successful end-user adoption. When a trainer is prepared with a good understanding of the workflows, staff, content, functionality and change management, training end users becomes an enjoyable experience for all involved and leads to smoother and wider end-user adoption.

During an organization's workflow validation sessions, it is important to include representatives from all departmental roles to ensure that proper workflow decisions are made. A valuable member often overlooked for inclusion in these sessions is a trainer. A trainer's presence in these sessions will give the trainer the foundation to respond appropriately to questions during end-user training sessions. When a trainer knows why or how a decision was reached, the trainer can offer background information

leading to more in-depth knowledge for staff. End users will then feel the organization's preparations will help equip them to use the new system. During workflow sessions, trainers may also be able to identify workflows that may prove to be cumbersome or difficult for end users.

How training sessions are grouped is an important key that can assist in leading an organization to successful end-user adoption. Departments that train as units have shown greater success than those trained in a general session. There should be two sessions per department: one for staff and one for physicians and nurse practitioners. Training a department together allows for workflow-specific training. For example, a pediatric department will have different workflows than an oncology department.

Training a department together allows staff to feel more comfortable in the classroom. Many staff members report that being trained with the people they work with allows them to ask questions without fear of embarrassment. Additionally, in department-specific training, questions asked during the session will usually apply to the whole class rather than one or two end users in the class. When training is directly applicable to the end user, they do not feel training to be ineffective or a waste of their time.

Many end users seeing the system for the first time during training may develop negative first impressions. Once end users have a negative perception of the system, it is often hard to convince them that the system will be a positive addition to their work.

Negative impressions of a new system can be contagious, and the need for trainers effective in change management can be a large benefit to any organization. There is a therapy aspect to bringing up a new system and trainers should be equipped to handle any situation. Having end users leave

training feeling well prepared, positive and excited should be the goal of any training session.

Materials prepared with department-specific content and given out in training is another effective way to engage staff. When staff feel they have been considered during the process of content build and workflow design, they will be more apt to adapt successfully to a new system.

Trainers should also be present at the department Go-Live to answer questions. Go-Lives can be intimidating experiences for staff and physicians; having a trusted, friendly face in attendance can calm nerves and aid in a smoother transition.

In addition to being present at the Go-Live, the trainer should check on staff periodically over the

following few weeks to watch for trends in any difficulties that end users may be having. These visits will also provide a contact for those users with lesser computer skills when frustrations with the new system set in.

When optimization opportunities arise, the trainer will be equipped with insight into a department's progress with the new system and able to design a program to further advance skills.

In conclusion, positive implementation of any new system depends on effective training by knowledgeable trainers who are involved before, during and after Go-Live. Consideration of staff skills, comfort levels and realistic workflows completes the necessary mix for successful adoption by confident end-users.

Jamie Alfano is a Beacon Partners Senior Consultant. Beacon Partners is one of the fastest-growing privately-held healthcare management consulting firms, coaching organizations in the development of strategies that are centered on maximizing Enterprise Yield performance. To achieve top levels of performance, an organization must factor strategic direction, physician alignment, economic incentives and overall market impact. Our experience has proven that focus on these critical success factors will strengthen an organization's position in the market and, ultimately, improve the patient's experience with the provider.

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