

## **Three, two, one, Go-Live!** from Noel Nicely, *Beacon Partners Epic Practice Director*



**Three, two, one, GO-LIVE!** To many these words are the culmination of months of hard work and planning wrought with many challenges and re-evaluations of long-held beliefs and processes. Whether this is an enterprise big-bang Epic install, phased approach, clinical applications only . . . whether your organization is doing a conversion from paper, another system or a combination . . . whether you will be truly paperless or existing in a hybrid state, Go-Live is an exciting yet stressful time.

Each organization's approach to an Epic Go-Live is both standard and unique, and Beacon Partners understands what that seemingly contradictory statement means. Go-Live planning at the highest level is fairly simplistic – build, test, test, test, create coverage/support model, delineate cutover tasks, manage and resolve issues and support post-Live activities. In an Epic implementation each of these tasks can have many facets that are unique to your organization and the type of Epic install. The devil, as they say, is in the details.

**Epic Implementation Strategy:** *Are you using the robust Model System and best practices for your implementation? To what degree are you following Epic's Flight Plan? How has your organization decided to manage variances? How fast is the implementation taking place and what kind of change management is needed to assist the end-users?*

**Testing Strategy:** *Will you use the testing tools provided by Epic? Who will do the testing – super users, project team? How much testing is required if the build is primarily from Epic's Model System?*

**Issue Management and Resolution:** *How do you prepare for Go-Live issues? Despite the months of system testing to weed out the bugs and get the application ready for prime time, Go-Lives always demand configuration and workflow*

adjustments. In many cases these changes can be made quickly and effortlessly, with little interruption to the user, while others require much time, energy, manpower and, in some cases, approvals from leadership.

Most common issues that arise during Go-Lives are the little things, like the wrong security assigned to a user record or a missing department in a provider record. Also, while workflows were designed with the help of subject matter experts and tested as part of unit or integrated testing, they have never been subjected to the real-life usage of the system.

*The project went very smoothly, and Beacon Partners filled a need we had, quickly and efficiently.*

- Virginia Nenneman, RN, MBA  
Ambulatory EMR Team  
University of California  
at Davis Health System

Go-Lives are where workflows encounter scenarios that require changes or even creation of new workflows that were somehow missed during the planning stages.

**Support** is dependent on many factors, including implementation strategy. For example, the support model will differ for a 48-hour install project, 250-provider specialty clinic, hospital revenue cycle application or enterprise install. Manpower, as in feet-on-the-floor support, is crucial for a smooth Go-Live and needs careful planning, especially when supporting an inpatient Go-Live which, unlike an ambulatory Go-Live, cannot limit the amount of patients who come through the door. Support also creates a dual role for trainers in imparting their knowledge to the weary users while also helping them gain experience in the new application.

While Go-Lives are stressful times for all involved, experienced personnel can help guide you to success. You may want to find a consulting firm that has been instrumental in the success of many previous Epic Go-Lives, a firm that understands the nuances of an Epic implementation.

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**Success Story:** Beacon Partners created an Epic EMR model for chronic diseases at UC Davis. For Beacon Partners Success Stories go to: **Beacon Partners Success Stories**

## Current Beacon Partners' Epic Engagements\*

Baylor College of Medicine  
Children's Hospital Boston  
Children's Hospital of Denver  
Cook Children's Health Care  
Cooper Health System  
Driscoll Children's Hospital  
Fletcher Allen Health Care

Group Health Associates  
Michigan Medical  
Northwestern Medical Faculty  
Park Nicollet Health Services  
Parkland Health and Hospital  
Premier Health Partners

Riverbend Medical Group  
Sparrow Health System  
Tri-Health Inc.  
University of California Davis  
University of Chicago Hospitals  
University of Texas Southwest  
University of Washington

\*Partial listing of Beacon Partners' current Epic clients

### ARRA Resource Center: No closing costs!

from Kevin Burchill, Esq., FACHE, *Beacon Partners Director*

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has spawned yet another potential lending scheme that needs to be looked into carefully before signing on the dotted line. Healthcare IT giants (like GE and now IBM) are offering financing for organizations to bring necessary IT programs on line in time to take advantage of the \$19b of federal funding slated to begin in 2011.

On its face, the financing offers present an option for currently cash-strapped facilities to make the requisite investment in a certified health IT system now and become shovel ready in time to take advantage of the maximum incentive payments. And, the flexible payment terms would allow for future repayments based upon the ultimate receipt of those governmental dollars.

Healthcare organizations are likely to get only one shot at this kind of governmental funding. No longer an unfunded mandate, electronic health records (EHRs) offer a real carrot (\$2m of base funding to hospitals and \$44k per physician for meaningful use). However, do not let the sticking point be committing to future operating costs that inhibit your organization's future strategies and economic survival.

For the full text of Kevin Burchill's editorial, go to:  
[Beacon Partners ARRA Resource Center](#)

To join our Epic, MEDITECH or GE Advisory Mailing List, email  
[advisory@beaconpartners.com](mailto:advisory@beaconpartners.com).

### Spotlight: Post-Live Support for EMRs

from Stacy Thompson, *Beacon Partners Consultant*

Suddenly every computer in your healthcare facility goes down . . . a week after you go Live on a new EMR. The moment you go Live, you are in support mode. Whether it's as radical as a total shutdown, downtime or an upgrade, you must prepare.

*Resources* - The best support starts with the best resources. This is especially true in the healthcare IT world because of the unique need to combine both technical and clinical knowledge.

*Troubleshooting* - The most important thing to remember when a problem is encountered within the EMR is that at its base it is still a software program. That said, troubleshooting efforts should begin by examining the basic steps in computer and software troubleshooting.

*Downtimes* - Just because you are Live, it does not mean that you are done making changes to the system. You will find that it takes just as much attention to detail to plan for optimization and upgrades as it does an implementation. Much of the optimization work will have been prioritized during the implementation phase, but optimization is also on-going as requests arise from end users.

For the full text of Stacy Thompson's article, go to:  
[Articles at Beacon Partners](#)

**Come see us at the  
2009 Epic Users' Group Meeting  
in Verona, Wisconsin  
September 22- 25, 2009**

An Epic-Approved Consulting Firm Since 1999, Beacon Partners provides the proven expertise to enhance your Epic system. Beacon Partners is the leading provider of organizational performance improvement services including IT adoption, business and clinical operations management, strategic advisory and technical solutions to the healthcare community.

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