Kofax White Paper

Document Capture Helps Health Care Providers Put Meaning into Electronic Health Record Utilization

Executive Summary

Interest in technology is at an all-time high, as health care providers are working to implement electronic health records and receive their share of the incentive funds available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This white paper explores how document capture systems can help providers optimize their EHR systems in an effort to achieve the "meaningful use" that is required by the landmark legislation.

Introduction

An old Irish proverb states, "You will never plough a field if you only turn it over in your mind."

The thought quite possibly could have been on legislators' minds as they came up with the HITECH provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The legislation, which provides about $19 billion in incentive funds, is meant to jump-start the move toward electronic health records (EHRs), which up until this point has remained largely a rhetorical exercise for many health care organizations.

Under the program, hospitals can collect an incentive payment calculated as the sum of a $2 million base amount plus Medicare discharge related payments. And physicians can qualify for a reimbursement of $44,000 to $64,000 dollars. Hospitals can begin to qualify for the incentives October 1, 2010,

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and eligible physicians can begin to qualify January 1, 2011. Beginning October 1, 2014 for hospitals and January 1, 2015 for eligible professionals, any provider that bills Medicare or Medicaid for services but cannot demonstrate the "meaningful use" of EHRs will receive less than 100% of the fee schedule.

The "carrot and stick" approach is designed to move the nation's health care providers beyond the theoretical acceptance of electronic records and toward the actual utilization of these systems. There's a catch, though. Health care providers can't just plug an electronic health record system in and qualify for the incentive funds. Instead, hospitals and clinics must demonstrate the meaningful use of EHRs.

The fact that the exact provisions of "meaningful use" are still evolving makes the journey even more complicated. However, it is a journey that health care organizations are keenly focused on. According to the 2010 Healthcare Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Leadership Report, meeting meaningful use criteria emerged as the top priority, cited by about 40 percent of the leaders taking the survey.

To achieve meaningful use, providers need to orchestrate a number of technologies — from hospital information to computerized physician order entry to electronic prescribing systems and others. This white paper will specifically explore how document capture systems can help health care organizations progress from paper environments to the actual utilization of an EHR system and ultimately to the "meaningful use" of an EHR system.

The State of EHR Adoption: More Talk than Walk

Indeed, health care leaders have been thinking about electronic health records for decades. The systems have been highly touted as a means to improve efficiency, care processes and patient outcomes.

However, the EHR walk has not kept up with the talk. Although studies contain conflicting conclusions about the level of adoption, there's no arguing with the fact that a large number of health care providers are still operating primarily with paper records.

Consider the following: A 2009 study from the Harvard School of Public Health, Massachusetts General Hospital and George Washington University found that less than 2 percent of surveyed hospitals had implemented comprehensive EHRs and less than 8 percent had a basic EHR system in place.

The 2010 HIMSS survey cites more encouraging numbers, yet still paints a picture of largely untapped potential. Nearly one-third of respondents (32 percent) indicated they have begun to install EHRs in at least one facility in their organization. Another quarter of respondents (26 percent) indicated they have a fully functional EHR at one facility in their organization. And 22 percent reported they have a fully operational EHR throughout their entire organization. The remaining respondents have either developed a plan to implement an EHR system (12 percent) or have not yet begun to plan for the use of an EHR solution (five percent).

The ARRA incentives, however, could help to accelerate the rate of adoption. Approximately 60 percent of respondents are making additional IT investments to position themselves to qualify for the incentives associated with the legislation. Nearly half of the respondents noted they would be able to meet all of these requirements by FY2011.

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First Things First: Utilization of EHRs

Much of the talk in the health care industry swirls around meaningful use, but health care providers need to walk before they can run. In others words, they need to actually use EHRs before they can consider the more specific requirements associated with meaningful use.

Even though some industry experts recommend a "big bang" EHR implementation — and the complete elimination of paper — such a transition is hardly practical. While EHRs certainly can reduce the use of paper, it's not likely that a health care organization will be operating in a completely paperless world any time soon.

For example, a medical center recently opened a brand new facility and installed an EHR system. The facility is "paperless" and does not have any space to accommodate paper storage.

However, more than half of the information coming into the EHR is from paper documents. As such, the organization needs a way to accept this information.

This health care provider, like many others across the country, is being forced to manage a hybrid health record. According to the American Health Information Management Association, a hybrid health record system includes both paper and electronic documents and uses both manual and electronic processes. For example, dictation, lab and x-ray results might be available electronically, while progress notes, ancillary care, provider information, graphic sheets and doctor's orders remain on paper. Other information could be maintained on other media types such as microfilm or video.

Frequently, trying to survive in a dual process world is detrimental to EHR implementations. The problem is that clinicians and other staff members toggle back and forth between systems, and often do not know where to find or send information. The confusion associated with storing some data in an electronic repository and some information in a paper repository often stifles the migration toward the EHR.

However, document capture systems enable providers to seamlessly manage a dual process world while continuing to transition from paper to digital processes quickly and successfully.

Such systems take paper and other documents, transform them into appropriate electronic formats, automatically classify and extract the information, and then deliver the data into workflow, databases and other relevant systems. In the final analysis, document capture systems can cut medical record processing time, reduce manual recordkeeping, protect patient privacy and give health care providers faster access to critical information at the point of care.

In addition, a document capture system helps to lay the groundwork for the continued migration and utilization of an EHR by enabling clinicians and other staff members to see all patient information in one centric view, thereby gaining many of the workflow and clinical decision support advantages commonly associated with electronic records. In essence, the systems help organizations populate electronic health records, which, in turn, make the EHR system more attractive to users. Thus, a snowball effect occurs: as more information is added to the EHR, more users become amenable to the adoption of the technology.

The Next Step: Meaningful Use of EHRs

Using an EHR system is only the beginning, though. To qualify for the incentive funds, health care leaders need to ensure that their organizations are meeting ARRA's "meaningful use" criteria.

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To do so, providers need to leverage their EHRs to meet the five broad goals of the ARRA legislation:

1. Improving quality, safety, and efficiency while reducing health disparities.

2. Engaging patients and families.

3. Improving care coordination.

4. Ensuring adequate privacy and security protections for personal health information.

5. Improving population and public health.

Certainly, health care organizations will be able to meet these requirements only if they are working with comprehensive electronic patient records. The fact that many organizations that have implemented an EHR system still receive a great deal of information via paper makes the use of a document capture system imperative in the quest for meaningful use.

Document capture systems are already helping organizations such as Spectrum Health and Geisinger Health build more complete EHRs.

At Spectrum Health, a system based in northern Michigan, Kofax® manages the capture of over 60,000 inpatients' documents, arriving in approximately 1400 different formats. Multi-page documents are separated automatically. Upon classification and validation of documents that do not have a bar code, they are organized into 70 specific categories, enabling more efficient processing.

At Geisinger Health System, a two-hospital system in northern Pennsylvania, Kofax similarly captures and transforms incoming paper documents into digital

information. The impact on patient care is profound, as patient histories, test results and payments are instantly available from any Geisinger facility.

As patient documents, reports, charts, x-rays, forms, billing and correspondence are captured and archived electronically, patients and caregivers can gain instant visibility and trigger relevant action. This not only improves patient care quality, it also reduces costs.

Document capture systems can also help paper based information become more relevant. A document capture system can transform any type of incoming document, in any format (paper, fax, film, email and other electronic formats), from anyone (payers, referring physicians and other parties) into searchable data down to the line item level and then deliver this "intelligence" to the point of care.

A document capture system also can help organizations meet some of the specific requirements associated with meaningful use. For example, the legislation requires health care providers to incorporate at last 50% of all clinical lab test results into the EHR as structured data. Providers, however, do not consistently receive results electronically. With a document capture system such as Kofax's in place, lab and test results could be received in any format and then converted into structured data within the EHR.

The legislation also calls for the electronic reporting of quality measures. Once this requirement is in place, providers might find it difficult to collect the data, according to a Health Data Management article quoting Erica Drazen, managing director of the healthcare group at Computer Sciences Corp., a technology and consulting firm in Falls Church, Virginia.

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Much of this data may not be in EHRs or isn't pulled out even if the systems collect it, and plenty of it resides on paper. These quality measures include the percentage of lab results incorporated in EHRs as structured data, clinical summaries provided to patients after an office visit and insurance eligibility inquires done electronically, among many others.

"The fact that much of the required data is not captured now is an area that's one of those sleepers," Drazen says.

A document capture system such as Kofax's could help. Such a system can pull data from disparate sources, turn it into actionable information and then integrate it with the EHR system, tracking and monitoring each touch point of the information flow.

ARRA is also making compliance with HIPAA more important for providers. Under the legislation, organizations are subject to substantial fines, with the top threshold reaching $1.5 million. In addition, the Attorney General of every state can sue individuals for HIPAA violations. Plus, HIPAA audits are now mandatory, whereas previously audits were conducted at the discretion of the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Kofax can help organizations comply with these more stringent regulations. As soon as patient data enters an organization at any point, it is captured, digitized and delivered in a secure IT framework where access can be controlled. Monitoring and reporting capabilities ensure that data flow can be traced from scanning to final archiving in the EHR or any other system. Alerts can be sent automatically if discrepancies are found or important data is missing.

Document capture systems could help organizations with the following meaningful use requirements:

- Recording demographics as structured data for at least 80% of admitted patients.

- Reporting quality measures to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) such as the percentage of diabetics with A1c under control or the percentage of hypertensive patients with blood pressure under control.

- Providing patients with electronic access to health information including lab results, problem lists, medication lists and allergies.

- Providing patients with an electronic copy of their discharge instructions and procedures at the time of discharge.

- Submitting electronic data to immunization registries.

- Exchanging key clinical information among providers electronically.

As health care providers move toward achieving meaningful use, leaders will increasingly discover that they need to implement not only the right EHR systems but also comprehensive change management programs that will help their organizations use these systems in the "meaningful" manner prescribed by ARRA. While doing so, the need to leverage a document capture system will become increasingly apparent. These systems can help health care organization leaders, clinicians and staff members make the jump from merely thinking about EHR utilization to actual use and ultimately to the all-important "meaningful use." As a result, organizations can expect to receive the incentive monies available to them and to harvest the improved patient care results that accompany the utilization of electronic systems.

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About HDM

For more than 14 years, Health Data Management has been the leading source for news and in-depth analysis on using information technology to achieve business goals and improve the quality of care; a trusted resource for the critical knowledge that senior executives need to make the right decisions in a highly competitive market.

The only IT magazine in the field written exclusively by a team of experienced journalists, Health Data Management has captured numerous awards for journalistic excellence.

About Kofax

Kofax® plc (LSE: KFX) is a leading provider of innovative smart capture and process automation software and solutions for the business critical First Mile™ of customer interactions. These begin with an organization's systems of engagement, which generate real time, information intensive communications from customers, and provide an essential connection to their systems of record, which are typically large scale, rigid enterprise applications and repositories not easily adapted to more contemporary technology. Success in the First Mile can dramatically improve an organization's customer experience and greatly reduce operating costs, thus driving increased competitiveness, growth and profitability. Kofax software and solutions provide a rapid return on investment to more than 20,000 customers in financial services, insurance, government, healthcare, business process outsourcing and other markets. Kofax delivers these through its own sales and service organization, and a global network of more than 800 authorized partners in more than 75 countries throughout the Americas, EMEA and Asia Pacific.

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