



4 Tips to Better Match Technology with Physician Demands

Healthcare information technology promises to speed workflows, improve data access and better the patient experience — yet many clinicians find it does just the opposite, increasing their documentation burden with little or no payoff in terms of clinical decision-making and patient care.

The EHR is a tool for data collection more than data analysis, meaning it can transform the clinician's desktop workstation into a ball and chain of documentation. Physicians, weighted by the sheer volume of data, may be glued to a screen trying to sift through and discern real-time, actionable information, rendering them ineffective in caring for the patient in front of them. In practice, clinicians struggle to provide quality care because of the distractions caused by the demands of documentation.

"Clinicians may have very little time with their patients. They don't have time to spend sorting through all of the data that may be available to them when all of it is flagged as important. Clinicians struggle with knowing which data is credible, which data is accurate and most up to date. When the data comes from many different sources, it's difficult to see the entire picture without spending a lot of time sorting, searching and validating the data," Kim Lewis, RN, BSN, global clinical solutions manager at Lenovo Health, told *Becker's* in an interview.

It doesn't have to be this way. Ms. Lewis shared four tips for alignment between IT solutions and what physicians need at the point of care.



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Global Clinical Solutions Manager at Lenovo Health

1. Alleviate tech-based burdens with endpoint solutions.

Some workflow burdens can be eased with secure mobile endpoint solutions and cloud technology. "Mobile technology in settings of care allows for clinicians to be able to spend more time with patients," Ms. Lewis said. Mobile devices, such as tablets, ensure clinicians "don't have a huge device in front of them and are actually able to interact with their patients," she said. They also enable real-time documentation and communication, so a clinician can receive up-to-the-minute lab results, notifications and communications from other members of the care team without having to sit down and log in to an alternate workstation or device.

2. Don't ditch desktop PCs just yet.

Even as mobile device use increases, desktop PCs remain a mainstay in most healthcare organizations. This is because mobile devices come with their own workflow challenges, such as battery life and connectivity, Ms. Lewis noted. Screens may not be large enough or vendor apps may not be optimized for mobile use, she said. Additionally, it's difficult to scroll through and tab through fields without a keyboard and mouse. For the most part, mobile devices are currently used as supplemental tools to desktop computers in healthcare organizations.

However, technology solutions are not one-size-fits-all. Faced with several device options, clinicians may still find a desktop workstation simply more efficient. "I think it's safe to say every clinician has their own preference and ideal workflow, and there are benefits and challenges to using both," Ms. Lewis said.

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3. Give clinicians the time and space to have their say.

IT departments should set up lines of communication with clinicians to better understand how to align IT solutions with the complex and varied demands coming from the provider side. “The No. 1 issue in all organizations, regardless of their function, is communication. Most organizations know better than to purchase lots of hardware and software without getting feedback from the end users,” Ms. Lewis said.

She recommended hospitals host a tech fair, giving clinicians a chance to voice their concerns and preferences when there are decisions to be made between different devices. A hospital she worked in even brought vendors to demo various solutions, and invited clinicians to test them and provide feedback. This gives the people involved in patient care who are struggling with the workflow changes and demands a chance to digest change, Ms. Lewis said, and an outlet to productively voice their opinions and concerns.

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4. Choose partners wisely.

Technology plays a huge role in clinician satisfaction and retention, yet many hospitals may feel strapped when it comes to fulfilling IT demands. The good news is hospitals do not have to go it alone, according to Ms. Lewis. Many hospitals are choosing to partner with IT-as-a-Service providers who can manage everything from configuration to support. This allows staff to focus on strategy and patient care rather than installing devices. “ITaaS is a great option for providers that need IT support and may not have the resources to staff onsite,” Ms. Lewis said. “It streamlines device management and maximizes dollars for other costs, while eliminating the burden of IT management on tech staff.”

However, she advises hospitals looking for ITaaS to carefully evaluate partners based on trust, hardware and software expertise, and working relationships with EHR vendors — a signal third-party services will work smoothly with an organization’s IT system. Most importantly, Ms. Lewis advised hospitals to look for companies that empathize with patients and providers, and demonstrate that understanding in their offerings. “It’s very important tech companies are thinking about who the end customer is when they are developing technology, because downtimes, trouble with connectivity, battery life, compatibility and function directly impact patients’ lives. And health organizations need to feel that their technology partners understand the impact any challenges have on the care they provide,” Ms. Lewis said.

Lenovo Health helps healthcare organizations achieve better patient outcomes with technology solutions that address the challenges of today’s healthcare environment and meet the goals of tomorrow’s care. To learn more, contact your Lenovo Health Account Representative or visit us at www.Lenovo.com/Health.

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