



# EHR for the Private Practice

A Beginner's Guide



*This ebook from AdvancedMD shows how an effective EHR platform can drive efficiencies across your practice, highlighting the top ten EHR technology requirements that ensure your charting workflow processes are flexible and sustainable.*

Electronic health records (EHR) technology enables private practices, hospitals, and healthcare systems to create a more patient-centric care model, improved workflow processes, and elevated levels of interoperability between healthcare providers and payors.

For private practices, an effective and comprehensive EHR platform can streamline charting workflow processes, driving productivity across your medical office.

But to gain unparalleled efficiencies and maximize your staff's productivity levels, it's crucial that you select the right EHR solution to fit your practice's needs. By investing in an EHR system that is designed to create flexible and sustainable charting workflows, your practice can deliver an exceptional patient experience without sacrificing an inordinate amount of time working in the EHR and risking burnout among your clinical staff and admin team.

# The Evolution of EHR Technology and Adoption

EHR solutions have been around for quite some time. The earliest iterations of EHR systems developed during the 1960s, but widespread adoption has only happened in the past decade. According to the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), less than 20% of office-based physicians had implemented a certified EHR solution in 2008.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of government policies—and the growing need to bridge the gap between healthcare providers, payors and hospital systems—EHR adoption rates have steadily increased during the last decade. By 2015, the 2008 paradigm flipped and nearly 80% of office-based physicians had implemented an EHR system.

In recent years, EHR solutions have benefited greatly from technological advancements, giving private practices of all sizes highly innovative EHR to enable the physician to prioritize patient care while driving efficient workflow processes across their medical office.





# The difference between EHR & EMR

While the terms electronic medical record system and electronic health record system are often used interchangeably, they are two different types of systems. Electronic medical records typically refers to the internal patient records that are kept within a health system or practice.

For example, mental health EMR software only contains the electronic medical records within the practice. An OB/GYN EMR does not connect to other healthcare providers like an EHR can.

Additionally, ophthalmology or physical therapy EMR software only work with the EMR systems and cannot access other practice software, which limits the use of the EMR software.



## How an EHR System Enables More Efficient Charting Workflow Processes

Effective charting workflow processes are the key to successful EHR implementation. Here is a quick overview to demonstrate how an EHR solution improves a practice's charting process:

1. A patient checks in for their healthcare appointment: When a patient arrives at the practice for an appointment, the receptionist enters or updates the patient's information within the EHR system, which includes insurance coverage and demographic data.
2. The healthcare provider accesses the patient's health records: Before seeing the patient, the provider uses the EHR to access the patient's records and review information from previous visits.
3. The healthcare provider then documents the patient visit: During or after the visit, the healthcare provider enters all information about the visit, starting with vital signs such as the patient's blood pressure, heart rate, and temperature. The healthcare provider also documents the chief complaint that resulted in the patient visit and their symptoms, as well as any physical exam findings and diagnostic results.
4. The healthcare provider creates a treatment plan: The healthcare provider documents the treatment plan within the EHR, which includes any necessary prescriptions or test orders.
5. Monitoring the patient's progress: After the appointment, the healthcare provider documents the patient's progress and response to treatment. They also document any updates that may involve other healthcare providers, such as referrals to specialists.

# Key Benefits of Effective EHR

Private practices that take the time to investigate their EHR options and adhere to best practices when deploying an EHR solution are more likely to experience significant improvements within their daily operations. With the right EHR system in place, healthcare providers gain back more time to devote to patient care, while also increasing employee satisfaction with fewer hours spent in the EHR platform.

By partnering with the right EHR service provider, you gain the tools you need to streamline and strengthen internal processes and build a thriving practice. Such key benefits include:

## **Integrated workflow processes**

With the right EHR platform, you're able to integrate the technology with other practice solutions, such as practice management and patient engagement tools.

The integrated workflow replaces mismatched technology that often bottlenecks workflows and creates more work for staff. The result is fewer errors and patient complaints that often happen with manual data entry. Healthcare providers also have a 360-degree view of their patients' histories in a single location, including supporting documentation and images.

## **Improved productivity**

EHR that integrates with practice management and patient engagement systems drives workflow efficiencies and productivity across all areas of the practice. Increased efficiencies not only minimize employee stress levels, but also help improve your practice's financial performance.

For example, an efficient charge capture process gives the admin staff immediate access to critical information, allowing them to submit claims and perform patient billing tasks in a streamlined fashion. Additionally, integrated patient engagement tools, including patient

portals and mobile apps, enable patients to complete intake forms online, creating an improved patient experience while saving your staff time and effort.

## **Remote work capabilities**

Healthcare providers often need to work in places other than their office. By using a cloud-based EHR system with safe and secure mobile apps, physicians have access to all patient information no matter where they are: in the office, on-call at the hospital or at home after hours. This level of access drives provider productivity and improves patient care.

For specialty practices it's imperative that the EHR technology aligns with their specific needs. For example, not every EHR solution is built to handle the nuances that come with mental health EMR, ob-gyn EMR, ophthalmology EMR, or physical therapy EMR requirements. Also, some specialty practices have very specific EHR needs, which is why there are specialty-specific solutions, such as a mental health EHR or urology EHR.

Fortunately, there are EHR systems, like the AdvancedMD platform, designed to meet the needs of most specialty and ambulatory care practices, including mental health, urology, physical therapy and other specialized healthcare providers—a major advantage as more primary care providers integrate specialty physicians and services into their practice.



# Why Your EHR Solution May be Causing Staff Burnout (and how to fix it)

Many clinicians using legacy healthcare systems are experiencing high rates of burnout, which can lead to employee turnover and diminished levels of patient care. According to the CDC in 2022, 46% of healthcare workers reported that they often felt burnout.<sup>2</sup> High stress levels among physicians and nursing staff are a major problem for private practices—burnout often leads to employees looking for new career opportunities.

In addition to nearly half of the healthcare workers surveyed often feeling burned out, the CDC reported that 44% of survey respondents said they were planning to look for a new job that year.

As the healthcare industry works to reduce burnout, the results of numerous studies have determined that administrative duties are a major factor. In a recent survey by HealthToday, 58% of doctors and 51% of nurses said that the amount of daily paperwork required to do their job was the second greatest contributor to their feelings of burnout.<sup>3</sup>

Even more concerning: A recent survey of more than 550 medical group owners conducted by MGMA revealed 75% report stress levels have gone up this year.<sup>4</sup> According to survey respondents, intensifying admin burdens from third parties—including prior authorizations and payer audits—are to blame.

These findings underscore the need for effective EHR solutions that remove bottlenecks within a private practice and help streamline daily operations. But what does an effective EHR service provide and how can you be sure you're implementing the right EHR platform for your practice?

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# Top 10 EHR Requirements to Create Flexible and Sustainable Charting Workflows

With an effective and efficient EHR service, your practice sees greater productivity across all areas, as well as creating a vastly improved patient experience.

One of the most critical aspects of an EHR system is its ability to streamline the practice's charting capabilities so that medical offices can simplify complex workflows, while also reducing the amount of time spent on unnecessary paperwork and documentation responsibilities.

The following ten EHR requirements ensure your EHR solution will meet your most critical needs while also streamlining charting workflow processes:

**1. A cloud-based solution that provides access to data from anywhere at any time**

The key to building successful daily operations across your practice relies on your staff's ability to access patient data from anywhere at any time. A cloud-based EHR makes it possible to get real-time data from any location, streamlining processes and driving productivity across the practice.

**2. Accelerated access to patient health records with an intuitive card framework (user interface) that makes it easy to navigate the technology**

Productivity is paramount when performing repetitious tasks searching for information in large databases. Modular card frameworks have been around for decades in engineering and are now entering EHR systems giving physicians incredibly fast access to common tasks such as patient health histories, medications, and other key data. Healthcare providers know just how important it is to have access to the most updated information at a moment's notice, especially in an emergency. Even with regular office appointments, small delays when accessing patient records can add up throughout the day, putting providers behind schedule and decreasing patient satisfaction. An EHR that provides accelerated access through intuitive interfaces is the foundation to a thriving practice that offers exceptional patient care.

**3. High levels of interoperability**

Interoperability is key to removing bottlenecks within internal processes and external communications with other healthcare providers, hospitals, payors, and other third-party healthcare systems. An EHR that provides high levels of interoperability ensures seamless workflows that increase both employee and patient satisfaction, while also providing the best possible outcome for each patient. Otherwise, your practice has data silos that can lead to delays and inaccurate assessments.

**4. Unhindered connection to Health Information Exchanges (HIEs)**

Because your patients are likely receiving care from other healthcare providers, it's imperative that your EHR seamlessly connects to Health Information Exchanges

(HIEs). Without such connections, private practices cannot deliver the best possible care for their patients. Because patients don't always share information in a timely manner, HIEs make it possible to securely access real-time information from other providers, giving you the most up-to-date patient information.

**5. Mobile apps that increase productivity levels across the staff**

Healthcare providers and their support staff often need to access patient data on the go. When selecting an EHR, make sure the platform includes a full suite of mobile apps that can be downloaded on both iOS and Android devices. By providing staff with complete mobile access for any device they use, patients receive the same level of care regardless of the provider's location. Additionally, staff can manage practice operations remotely, which is especially helpful for practices with multiple locations.

**6. Sophisticated report and analytics functions that improve decision making on both the clinical and admin sides of the practice**

More informed decision making within your practice relies on in-depth analytics and customized reports that offer deep insights on everything from patient care and treatment plans to patient demographics, employee productivity levels, and revenue gains. An EHR that offers sophisticated reporting and analytics functions can be a highly instrumental tool, giving you the information you need to make the most informed decision possible.

**7. An intuitive patient portal**

An intuitive patient portal reduces administrative burdens for your staff, while giving your patients higher levels of flexibility and convenience. An effective patient portal platform allows your patients to schedule visits online, communicate easily with their healthcare providers, send prescription requests, and even pay their medical bills via the secure platform. Be sure your EHR easily integrates with your patient portal, enabling your team to simplify data management tasks and patient engagement responsibilities.

**8. Robust ePrescription & EPCS capabilities**

Meeting state and federal regulations for controlled substances is a top challenge for many practices. By selecting an EHR that includes EPCS, an ePrescribing functionality, practices can ensure they have the necessary guardrails in place when managing eRx workflows. Instead of having to record and keep multiple paper documents, EPCS automatically maintains a full DEA audit history.


EPCS makes it possible to sign prescriptions with one click, while also using automated data management features. Your practice also gains two-factor authentication, which is now required by the DEA. Additionally, with the right EHR solutions, private practices can integrate ePrescribing functionality with medication cards (user interface framework for productivity) and virtually connect to pharmacies directly in the EHR.

**9. Unified telehealth workflows**

Telehealth continues to be a massive benefit for healthcare providers and their patients, especially when it comes to mental health services, geriatric care, rural, and other remote needs. Because charting workflow processes for telehealth differs from traditional in-person appointments, it's critical that your EHR system comes equipped with easy-to-use telehealth features that enable clear and concise charting capabilities for virtual appointments.

**10. Productivity gains across the practice**

Productivity plays a critical role in every aspect of your practice, from reducing operational costs to improving the overall patient experience. A highly productive staff is less likely to feel burnout and often reports higher levels of job satisfaction. The reality is that high productivity levels are crucial to building a successful practice—and very few medical office software solutions have as much of an impact on your practice's productivity as your EHR solution. This is why it's so important to implement an EHR that drives efficiencies across your medical office, from charting workflows, billing responsibilities and other admin tasks to patient data capabilities and reporting functions. Your practice is only as strong as your EHR.



# The AdvancedMD EHR Solution: Improved patient care, higher productivity and more efficiencies across your private practice

Private practices are increasingly turning to the AdvancedMD EHR solution, which meets all requirements for an effective EHR system. With AdvancedMD, your medical office has access to an integrated practice management, EHR and patient engagement platform that provides the tools you need to create a unified workflow for charting—and all other workflow processes.

The AdvancedMD EHR solution delivers unparalleled productivity across the practice which leads to improved patient care models, more efficient workflows, and more informed decision-making across the practice.

To find out how AdvancedMD EHR software can greatly improve your daily operations, [schedule a demo](#) and see AdvancedMD in action.

## References

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