

Migrating to an EHR: The Promises and Perils



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Objectives

- Understand some of the benefits of using an EHR
- Ways to minimize productivity loss
- Challenges a physician might encounter with an EHR and how to minimize these
- General discussion of issues

Benefits: Potential Productivity and Financial Improvement

- Fewer chart pulls
- Improved efficiency of handling telephone messages and medication refills
- Improved charge capture
- Reduced transcription costs
- Increased formulary compliance and clearer prescriptions leading to fewer pharmacy call backs
- Improved coding of visits
- ARRA incentives and avoiding penalties from CMS and health plans
- Proactive patient reminders increasing traffic and revenue

Adapted from Potential Benefits of an EHR, AAFP Center for HealthIT

Benefits: Quality of Care Improvement

- Easier preventive care leading to increased preventive care services
- Point-of-care decision support
- Reduced transcription errors
- Rapid and remote access to patient information
- Easier chronic disease management
- Integration of evidence-based clinical guidelines
- Population management
- Proactive patient reminders

Adapted from Potential Benefits of an EHR, AAFP Center for HealthIT

Benefits: Job Satisfaction Improvement

- Fewer repetitive, tedious tasks
- Fewer repetitive dictations
- Less "chart chasing"
- Improved intra-office communication
- Access to patient information while on-call or at the hospital
- Easier compliance with regulations
- Demonstrable high-quality care
- Access records from multiple locations in an office

Adapted from Potential Benefits of an EHR, AAFP Center for HealthIT

Benefits: Customer Satisfaction Improvement

- Quick and easier access to their records and medical information
- Reduced turn-around time for telephone messages and medication refills
- A more efficient office leads to improved care access for patients
- Improved continuity of care (fewer visits without the chart)
- Improved delivery of patient education materials
- Easier access to their information by patients

Adapted from Potential Benefits of an EHR, AAFP Center for HealthIT

Benefits: Increased Security

- Chart access controlled by passwords
- Possible to limit medical record access by job function
- Log file creates a very detailed audit trail of who looked at what in the chart – helps keep honest people honest
- “Break the glass” functionality allows for wider access in an emergency

Ways to minimize productivity loss

- **FACT:** There will be productivity loss in the short term. How you manage it and how fast you recover is up to you – your planning and preparation
- Pay now or pay later in either time or \$

Ways to minimize productivity loss:

Preparation

- Training
 - General computer comfort
 - One on one works best with physicians
- Preloading
 - Once trained, providers preload each day
 - Clinic staff also preload once trained
 - Does not substitute for a patient visit
- Communicate the plan with patients
- Workflow
 - Examine the workflow on frequently repeated tasks and redesign for the EHR.
- Choose a slow period – delay periodic exams to make way for urgencies
- Dry run in advance of go-live

Ways to minimize productivity loss:

Go-Live

- Superuser identified and available
- Create your own strategy (with REACH's help) and don't just use the vendor's
- Strategies to consider
 - Extended hours
 - Using EHR until you get behind
 - Every 4th patient, then 3rd, ...
- Consider “teams” if they exist or individuals
- Communicate the change with your patients
- Consider extending hours – it increases access and allows for learning the system while your “at the elbow” support is at the office

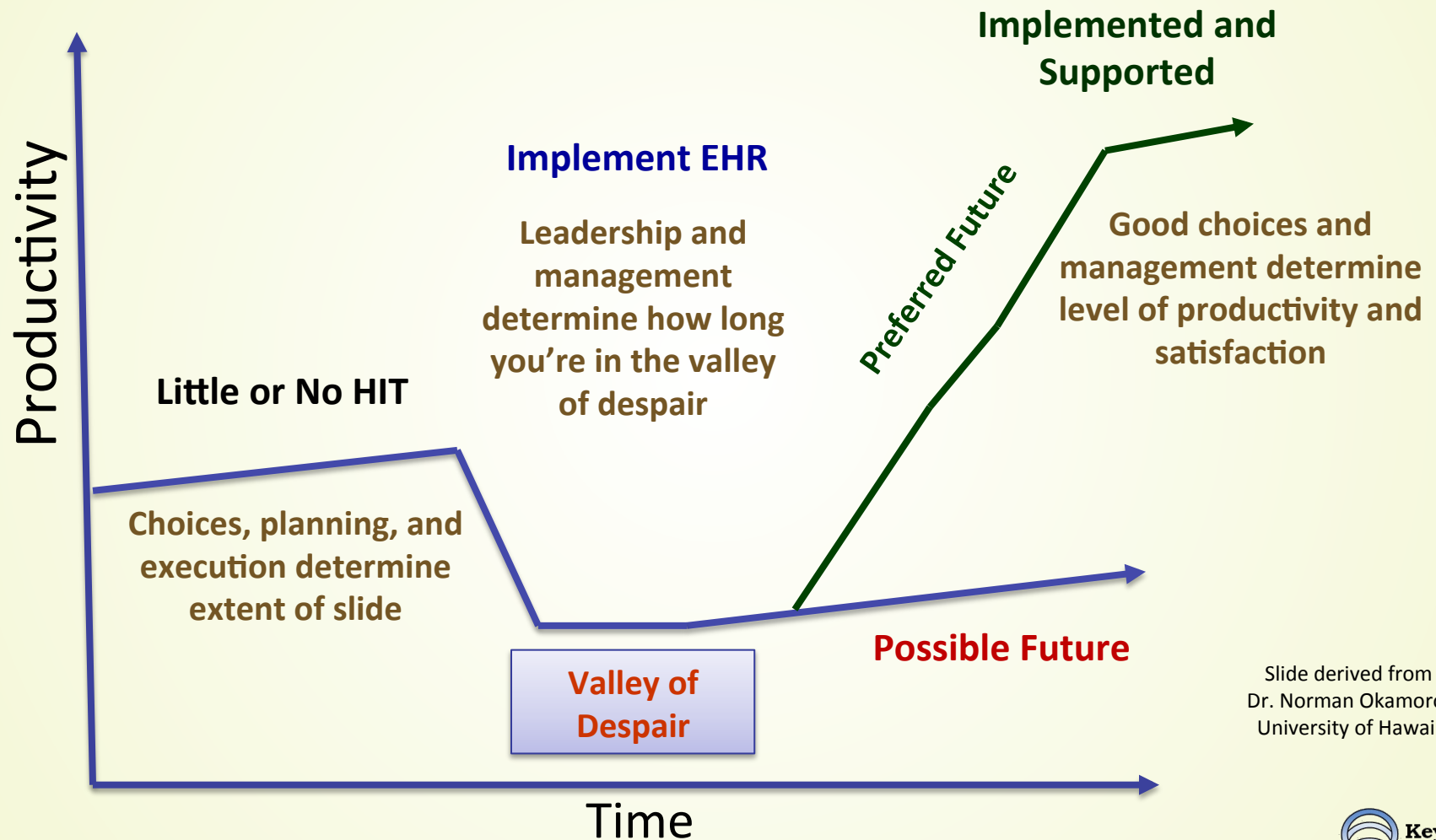
Ways to minimize productivity loss: After Go-Live - Optimize

- Observe the workflow, look for efficiencies
- Meet as a cross-functional team to discuss issues
- Observe metrics – address problem areas
- Consider modifying the physical environment
- Enlist input from the patients

Challenges Physicians Might Encounter

- Clicks
- Logins
- Finding things
- Feeling dumb
- Frustration
- Anger
- Never ending in-basket
- Simple things take longer
- Not knowing how to do things
- The “Valley of Despair”

Minimizing the Challenges depends on Preparation



Slide derived from Dr. Norman Okamoto, University of Hawaii

Mitigating the Challenges

- Preparation and training are important
- Stay focused on the big picture
- Track improvement with metrics
- Use the same tools discussed to minimize productivity loss
- Identify pain points, prioritize them and work as a team to address them one by one

Recommendations:

- Work as a team with all the staff in the clinic
- Follow the process that REACH uses to prepare you for go live – from Readiness Assessment through Go-Live to “Effective Use”
- Use the tools from the REACH (Stratis Health) Toolkit:
 - <http://www.stratishealth.org/expertise/healthit/clinics/clinictoolkit.html>
- Recognize that this is about providing better care for our patients and it is not about the \$ (though it helps)



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