



# 9 Ways to Use Your EHR to Stop Physician Burnout in Its Track

Don't equate EHR use with more homework.

BY DR. SETH FLAM

**E**njoy all of the reasons you really became a physician—and go home on time.

Physician burnout isn't fun. It can lead to increased errors and lower-quality care for patients—in some cases, consequences for patients are irreversible. Some physicians equate EHR use with more homework, believing the common misconception that spending extra hours each night finishing up notes, addressing inboxes, and catching up on messages and emails, is inevitable. It's not. While many physicians feel that technology, along with government regulation and the tremendous change in the healthcare industry, adds to today's main burdens contributing to burnout—optimizing the right EHR software will actually greatly *increase* a physician's efficiency. A sophisticated EHR will serve your workflow, not hinder it. When all of the components of your software speak to each other seamlessly, the stream of your practice as a whole improves.

Part of making sure your EHR helps you evade burnout is learning how to utilize the entire system optimally. You should strategize your EMR use and need to document. Your EHR needs to do everything from allow you to flow efficiently through a chart to improve your revenue cycle time; only then will you increase your profits and overall quality of patient care. That way, you can enjoy all of the reasons you real-

ly became a physician—and go home at a reasonable hour.

**1. Choose your practice's EHR champion.** Figure out who on your team is an EHR power user—this is your technology leader. Just watching his or her process will help you by giving you a plethora of tips and shortcuts to dramatically speed up your process.

**2. Delegate.** Allocate duties and tasks in your EHR that don't require your specific skills to staff members or explore the option of hiring a trained scribe. Use your team—don't

nect to the Internet from your iPad or iPad mini (in addition to any mobile device, tablet, laptop or desktop platform). You can choose to touch, talk or type depending on what method will be fastest and more efficient for you. Dictation functionality is built in and can be used to replace typing for faster data entry and you can prescribe and check your schedule from your smart phone. Mobile medicine is paramount to efficiency in your practice.

**4. Make sure the system you choose is truly integrated.** Piecing together a patchwork structure of

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try to do everything on your own. Sharing your EHR workload is one of the easiest ways to start alleviating burnout. Work together to share documentation duties.

**3. Choose a cloud-based EHR with full functionality on an iPad.** You shouldn't have to chart from home—or record the same notes twice. When your EHR is designed for an iPad, you can chart at the bedside or exam room while maintaining eye contact with your patients. Perform a complete SOAP note and chart from anywhere you can con-

nect to the Internet from your iPad or iPad mini (in addition to any mobile device, tablet, laptop or desktop platform). You can choose to touch, talk or type depending on what method will be fastest and more efficient for you. Dictation functionality is built in and can be used to replace typing for faster data entry and you can prescribe and check your schedule from your smart phone. Mobile medicine is paramount to efficiency in your practice.

**5. Use and optimize your integrated patient portal.** Correct use of a sophisticated patient portal will undoubtedly reduce clutter and save time. When patients check in before their visit and enter their histories

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and current medications themselves, your staff members can spend their time on other duties. The patient’s information will then be organized before their visit. Having easy access to their lab results and the ability to electronically communicate with your practice will also save you and your staff valuable time.

**6. Blueprints.** Software is meant to be automated. While templates are helpful in the automation process, blueprints take the level of sophistication and flexibility steps beyond templates. Your system should provide the blueprints and customization you need. You should be able to repurpose old encounters as favorite blueprints, making them easily accessible.

**7. Coding.** Using an EHR with advanced ICD-10 coding features and

enhancements will save you time by guiding you to the most precise code appropriate for the clinical presentation of your patients. An efficient ICD-10 code search and conversion tool will eliminate many hours you would otherwise spend manually looking up codes, especially when the coding requirements become much more stringent late in 2016.

**8. e-Prescribe.** Most EHR systems have an e-Prescribing module, but did you know that over 200 EHRs borrow their interface from a third party? Working on an EHR that has a fully integrated e-Prescribing interface will enhance workflows and save time. Remember, high quality electronic scripts reduce the time providers spend managing rejections or phone calls from their local pharmacist.

**9. Alerts.** Alert overload kills productivity. Alerts should only be disruptive to a workflow in the

case of a serious patient health risk, like a drug-allergy alert. Less critical alerts should be subtle, enough to notice but not to disrupt workflow.

Don’t employ a dinosaur-era EMR system. When you choose state-of-the-art software, your EHR should cut the effects of burnout for every member of your practice. **PM**



**Dr. Flam** is CEO & President, HealthFusion, Inc. HealthFusion and its MediTouch cloud software suite is a subsidiary of Quality Systems/NextGen. MediTouch is comprised of a range of web-based software

solutions for physicians, medical practices and billing services; including practice management and electronic health record (EHR) applications, patient portal, clearinghouse, interoperability and connectivity solutions.