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Case Study

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CHOA

CHARLESTON HEMATOLOGY
ONCOLOGY ASSOCIATES

Successful Migration to New EHR Prepares Practice for Value-based Care

About CHOA:

Hundreds of patients visit Charleston Hematology Oncology Associates' (CHOA) two locations in the Lowcountry region along South Carolina's coast every month for diagnosis and treatment of many types of cancer and blood disorders. It's no wonder the private practice of seven hematologists and oncologists considers its Electronic Health Record (EHR) system to be an important tool in their mission to improve the health and quality of life for its patients.

The Challenge:

For many years, the practice used Varian's Aria® as its EHR, but when Varian announced it would not update its technology to meet the new requirements for value-based care, CHOA faced a tough choice. While switching from one system to another is never easy, the practice, which is committed to using state-of-the-art technologies that enhance the delivery of safe care and meeting requirements set forth by CMS and other payers, decided to embark on a change.

Practice leadership began to search for options to satisfy their needs for an EHR that would support value-based care models and minimize disruption to the practice during the transition. Throughout the discovery phase, they identified several hurdles they would need to overcome, with one of the biggest being the challenge of transitioning legacy data to the new EHR system.

> "I feel lucky to have a team behind us from McKesson Specialty Health that understands the importance of marrying technological efficiency of the Electronic Health Record and the ability to deliver the best care to our patients."
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> *Dax Arrington*
> *Practice Administrator, CHOA*

The Three Types of Data Migration:

CHOA learned that there are three types of EHR data migrations. **The first, migration to a newer generation of an EHR system already in use, is the easiest to complete.** If, for example, the practice was upgrading to a newer version of their current system, chances are much of the legacy data could be automatically mapped to the new version. This type of migration can often occur over a weekend with minimal down time and disruption to patient care.

The second type is migration to an EHR of a cooperating vendor. Although migration from one vendor's EHR system to another's is more complicated, if the original EHR's vendor is willing to share information about their data with the new vendor, much of the mapping process can be finalized before the actual migration occurs.

The third, and most difficult, type is migration to an EHR without vendor cooperation. When the vendor of the current EHR system is not willing to share information about how data is stored, the new vendor must figure out how to interpret the data before any mapping can be done – a task made even more challenging when the original EHR system is not able to export data so that it can be read.

Practices making this type of transition should allot many additional months to work with the new vendor's IT staff as they determine how to migrate the data and replace existing workflows. Further, the practice must be aware that the transition will require a much higher investment of practice staff time for the data to be consumed and reconciled. This type of transition can take years to complete.

The Solution:

Upon learning that McKesson Specialty Health had partnered with Varian to make the transition from Aria to iKnowMed℠ Generation 2 smoother for its customers, CHOA decided this to be the best option. Varian provided secure access to their database, which enabled the McKesson Specialty Health team to discern the categories and terminology and create a map that facilitates the move of an Aria user's data into the appropriate fields in iKnowMed Generation 2. While the migration still requires some manual processing of data and time to confirm all information migrated correctly, the transition from Aria to iKnowMed Generation 2 can be completed in four to six weeks.

Such was the case for CHOA's change to iKnowMed Generation 2. Prior to the actual data migration, Dax Arrington, practice administrator at CHOA, led the practice's internal team and worked with the McKesson Specialty Health for three months as they examined CHOA's data to determine exactly which data, notes and treatment information needed to be brought into iKnowMed Generation 2.

Success at CHOA:

Thanks to the diligent preparation and the system's robust migration process, the practice experienced minimal disruption to patient care and very little overlap time when information had to be entered into both systems.

Arrington was very pleased with the transition at CHOA, and insists that a good understanding of the process and a strong technology vendor relationship are key factors to a successful EHR migration. **"Conversions to Electronic Health Records are very daunting and stressful, but it became clear early on that we had a team from McKesson Specialty Health that understood the steps that needed to be taken to ensure a smooth transition to iKnowMed Generation 2."**

He does suggest that practices going through any type of EHR change need to be mentally prepared. Even well planned and executed migrations require a period of transition for practice staff to learn how to use a new system and implement a new workflow.

"The implementation team alleviated the fear from the start through their ability to hone in to our individual needs. They understood the product inside and out and most importantly were able to seamlessly integrated it into our clinics workflow."

Dax Arrington
Practice Administrator, CHOA