ROI: The Missing Link in an EMR Environment

Electronic Medical or Health Records (EMR or EHR) hold out the promise of a completely automated, streamlined process for health information management (HIM) departments across the country. But there is one missing component that many EMR/EHR vendors tend to gloss over—the fact that an EMR/EHR system cannot handle the printing, fulfillment, mailing, and billing of release of information (ROI) requests automatically. This means that a human being still needs to intervene to manage ROI requests.

EMR/EHR vendors push HIM departments to bring this process in-house. They claim substantial gains in revenue and a simple transition to the new operation. The reality is that in-house ROI usually means adding staff, implementing a process, and the reality of a new workflow. And, it rarely delivers any real benefit to the hospital’s bottom line.

A Real World Example—Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System

Spartanburg turned to HealthPort to answer this challenge. HealthPort had a suite of solutions to fill the ROI gap left behind after Spartanburg’s EMR implementation. HealthPort first responded with its shared services ROI offering, HealthPort ROI Partner which allowed the internal staff at Spartanburg to process ROI requests securely and efficiently, while utilizing HealthPort’s state-of-the-art technology to handle back-office burdens such as billing and collections from multiple requesters. In addition, HealthPort ROI Partner offered Spartanburg a revenue-generating option for non-patient ROI requests. HealthPort ROI Partner is a complete release of information processing system that allows facilities to either scan medical records that are still in paper form or retrieve and process records directly from an EMR/EHR. Files are then downloaded to HealthPort’s centralized digital backbone for the printing, mailing, fulfillment, invoicing, and collections process. HealthPort stays abreast of all pending ROI legislation, and maintains complete compliance with state and federal regulations.

The next component needed was the ability to handle requests for medical records that were still maintained on microfiche. HealthPort implemented its on-site release of information solution, HealthPort ROI by putting two of their own associates on-site at Spartanburg to aid with retrieving and scanning these records directly into HealthPort’s proprietary ROI software as needed. This would eliminate the back scanning nightmare that operating solely on an EMR or EHR would require and created a customized solution that was the perfect fit for Spartanburg’s unique needs.

At A Glance:

Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System
Spartanburg, SC

Facilities
- Spartanburg Regional Medical Center
- Spartanburg Hospital for Restorative Care

Location
The Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System is a multicampus facility located in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Number of Beds
588 (Spartanburg Regional Medical Center)

Solution
HealthPort ROI Partner (revenue-generating shared services option)
**Problem Solved**

With HealthPort assisting in the processing of medical records on microfiche, Spartanburg has been able to keep their focus on the processing of new records. This has enabled the HIM department to scan and index all records within 24 hours after discharge. What’s more, with HealthPort ROI Partner Spartanburg has the ability to gain significant cash flow from the ROI process. The hospital now receives 50% of all ROI revenue from non-patient ROI requests, without the need of complicated infrastructure or the addition of FTEs. This has all helped Spartanburg to get the most out of their EMR investment.

Lynn Henderson, of Spartanburg Regional, feels this arrangement has benefited her organization in multiple ways stating, “When I first started in this industry, everything was done by paper. We would receive weekly calls from administration about the complaints from requesters waiting for their records. EMR/EHR systems have greatly increased the flow of information, and HealthPort has prevented logjams by handling fulfillment and mailing. And when it comes to billing, I really think HealthPort can collect the requester dollars better than we can. When you factor in what it would cost to do it ourselves, I believe HealthPort definitely delivers a higher return on the overall investment”. It’s just another example of how HealthPort helps hospitals pull the most value from their EMR/EHR deployment.

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