

What tips do those of you who have used an EHR have for those who are thinking about getting one?

1. Follow the 12 steps outlined at <http://www.okprn.org/12StepsToEMR.pdf>. Most of all, have a detailed and systematic action plan for selecting your EHR and involve all future users in the decision making process as a team.
2. Make sure you understand all of the portions of the EHR, these are rarely turnkey and require add-ons, usually at an additional price.
3. Make sure you have someone local to help with the network and integration piece. The necessary level, extent, and cost of support (both hardware/network and software) must be clearly understood in advance.
4. Spend some time shadowing several providers who actually use the system, rather than taking the demo person's word for it. OKPRN can help you find clinicians who already use the system you are interested in.
5. It will take time for your staff to see the benefits of the EHR, but when they find out that it will take care of the lost chart syndrome, there will be no going back. In a typical small office (1-5 clinicians) it usually takes 4-6 months to get over the hardest (initial) period of implementation.
6. In the beginning you might have a slow down in your cash flow, but don't worry you will get caught up and perhaps beyond what you were making before. If the EHR is implemented properly in a small office, you can break even or realize an increased revenue typically in 6-12 months.
7. It has been found to be most effective if the EHR is all inclusive, i.e. it will schedule, bill, chart, order labs, and prescribe. However, you may want to stick to your original billing system for specific reasons, if it is able to interface with your EHR.
8. It takes time to learn the new system and some are tempted to go back to old habits, it will work itself out. Once you get through the pain, it will save you time, and most likely make you document better.