Improving electronic health records

Electronic health records (EHR)—the digital version of a patient's information—are secure, transferrable records with incredible potential to improve the care physicians provide for patients. Learn how health information exchanges allow health care providers to securely share patient data electronically to support patient care across the country.

Administrative burden of EHRs

An AMA and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center study found that for every hour of face-to-face time with patients, physicians spend nearly two additional hours on EHR and clerical tasks (PDF).

Electronic Health Record usability

An extensive AMA-RAND Corporation study (PDF) on physician satisfaction led the AMA to provide eight EHR requirements.

EHR design and configuration must:

- Enhance physicians' ability to provide high-quality patient care
- Support team-based care
- Promote care coordination
- Offer product modularity and configurability
- Reduce cognitive workload
- Promote data liquidity
- Facilitate digital and mobile patient engagement
- Expedite user input into product design and post-implementation feedback

The AMA partnered with MedStar Health's National Center for Human Factors in Healthcare to develop an evaluation framework on the usability of EHRs. See how 20 common EHRs fared in the evaluation.

Knowing the impact that EHRs can have on patient safety, the AMA, MedStar Health's National Center for Human Factors in Healthcare, and The Pew Charitable Trusts created a framework (PDF) with more rigorous test cases to support physicians and practices in ensuring their products work as intended pre and post implementation.

EHR partnerships

The AMA also partnered with AmericanEHR to organize information and optimize decision making among an online community of clinicians who are actively using information technology.

The AMA is also represented on the advisory committee of the SMART Initiative to develop a flexible information infrastructure that would allow free, open development of plug-and-play apps. The work of the SMART Initiative would increase interoperability among health care technologies—including EHRs—in a more cost-effective way.