Top Challenges That Keep Hospital CIOs Up at Night

– EHR Optimization

An Iatric Systems eBook

IATRIC® systems

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Introduction

Hospital CIOs and IT leaders have a lot on their plate. Growing workloads, shrinking budgets, and continued rapid change most likely have you concerned about your ability to keep pace. Every day you and your staff are asked to take on more and more tasks. Many involve technology that's new and unfamiliar. All are important and needed urgently.

In a [2014 survey of hospital CIOs](#) by executive search firm SSi-SEARCH, when asked: "Which of the following areas does your health system perceive as most critical?" CIOs responded:

- [EHR optimization](#) - 66 percent
- [Population Health & Analytics Initiatives](#) - 63 percent
- [Meaningful Use Stage 2 (and now Stage 3)](#) - 59 percent

This eBook examines the challenge of EHR Optimization and provides key steps to help it go more smoothly. When you go home at night, you'll know that your most critical projects are under control — on schedule, and done correctly and cost-effectively.

CIO Challenge:
EHR Optimization

EHR Optimization is all about enhancing the capabilities of an Electronic Health Record system to streamline workflows, reduce manual entry, and provide clinicians with the information they need at the time of care. To a very large extent, this is the role of interfaces — the connections between different systems that allow data to be transferred and shared as part of the clinician's workflow.

Interoperability Is Possible Now

This need for interoperability has been embraced by ONC, which in early 2015 released its draft **Nationwide Interoperability Roadmap** to a future healthcare IT ecosystem. This IT ecosystem will be glued together by an interoperability standard, which is in the early stages of development, and which will be rolled out during the next 10 years. Milestones are set at 3, 6, and 10 years.

There are steps that you can take now to begin the process of making your systems interoperable.

How to Make Your Systems Interoperable:

Many hospitals would like to move forward with integration, or build interfaces more effectively, but are uncertain how to proceed. While every project varies, there are seven key steps to bringing interoperable systems to life:

01 **Understand**

02 **Profile Systems**

03 **Map the Data**

04 **Build and Test**

05 **Evaluate Issues**

06 **Monitor & Troubleshoot**

07 **Keep Up with Requirements**

1. Understand and document the workflow: not just the current workflow, but the optimal workflow. Identify key problem areas where information is not being transferred between systems.

2. Document and profile the systems being connected: Get specific about all the information that needs to be transferred. Document the current state and the final desired outcome.

3. System Integration: Map the data between the systems being connected.

4. Testing: Build the interfaces and test them to make sure they work as designed.

5. Go live: Evaluate any testing issues and review for any show-stoppers. This evaluation should be conducted by a cross functional team, to make sure everyone agrees on the go-live.

6. Monitor and troubleshoot: Assign a person or a team to monitor the system after go-live to identify any issues and to evaluate the severity of those issues.

7. Keep up with evolving requirements: Document internal and external requests and evaluate if additional interfaces are required. Then, start the process again.

Integration Challenges

When deciding on your integration strategy, it's important to analyze your in-house integration management capabilities by asking these questions:

Does your staff have time to **build and manage interfaces** without falling behind on other critical IT projects?

Do you have time to **coordinate all required activities**?

Can your staff **troubleshoot** when there are problems sending information from one system to another?

What is your internal **level of interface expertise**? Is it feasible to teach staff how to build interfaces?

Can qualified team members **monitor interfaces 24/7/365**?

Can your IT team **scale up and down** as needed?

Are you able to quickly **manage the potential risks** if your interfaces crash?

View this Infographic: Integration Challenges for more detail

Benefits of Using Outside Interoperability Experts

If the answer to any of the previous questions was "no," then you may decide that your strategy should involve out-sourcing some of your interoperability work. Tapping the expertise of outside interoperability experts provides a number of benefits:

- It's more cost-effective, because you'll have access to specialized expertise on an as-needed basis
- Your staff is more productive and can focus on other critical projects
- Faster implementations, so you can meet your critical deadlines
- Higher-quality deployments, tuned to your facility and workflows
- Reduced risk of interface and project failure
- You're protected when employees leave or retire
- Ability to rest easy, even on holidays, with dependable 24/7/365 support

Getting Help:

Tying up resources to handle building and managing interfaces is often not an efficient use of in-house IT staff who typically have many other responsibilities. Here are some of the ways that an interoperability service provider can relieve the burden:
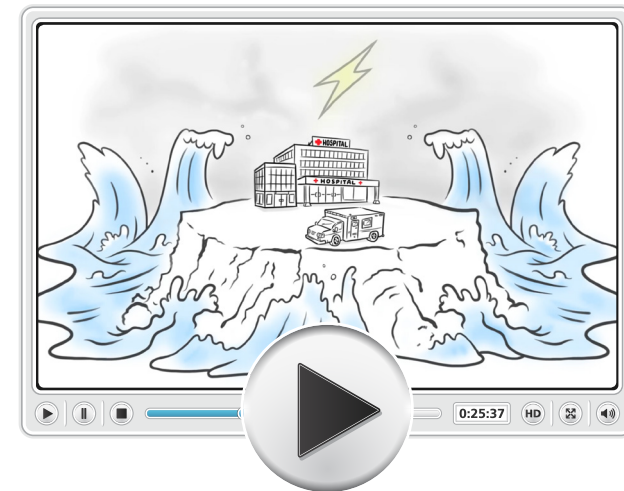
- In-depth knowledge of the systems being connected
- Ability to leverage existing relationships with health IT system vendors
- Experience with similar integration projects, industry standards, coding, networking, and regulations
- Ability to provide 24 x 7 monitoring and support
- Quality, consistent, complete documentation
- A trusted resource for recommending solutions and educating staff

About the Iatric Systems Professional Services Team

EHR technology, hundreds of specific functional solutions, and Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) are all bringing dramatic improvements to healthcare. Choosing and implementing the right technology at your healthcare organization may be putting a huge burden on your IT and project management teams. To effectively manage manpower and ensure success, you can turn to the highly-experienced Iatric Systems Professional Services team.

This team can help you plan, research, evaluate, and implement the right healthcare IT technologies as they are needed. Professional service recommendations are based on what is best for your organization and its systems, processes, best practices, and operations. We work with all EHRs and vendor systems to meet your specific needs.

Watch this 2-minute video to learn more.

Request a meeting with the Professional Services team today, or call **978-805-4100** for more information.