



The primary questions most practices are facing today are, “Which EHR systems should we consider?” and “How do we choose?” Read on for how to address these issues and more from **BASIL HOURANI** President and CEO, **Pulse Systems, Inc.**

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**T**he past nine months have been filled with landmark changes for all who work in the medical field. Whether your job is bill-keeping, filing insurance claims, or practicing medicine, the government’s passing of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is impacting your future.

It was less than a year ago, in February 2009, when Congress enacted the ARRA, initiating a cascade of events beginning with the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH Act). The \$19 billion HITECH Act provides economic incentives to physicians for adoption of an EHR system. Physicians can earn \$44,000 to \$65,000 over a five year period if they meet the qualifications established in the Act. The HITECH Act states that physicians must use a “certified EHR” for use in a “meaningful way,” two terms that are hot topics of discussion among many practices and are expected to be defined in the next few months.

Not only does the HITECH act bestow financial benefits to participants, it also negatively impacts the pocketbooks of non-participants. Physicians electing to not comply by 2014 will

have their Medicare reimbursements reduced by:

- 1 percent for services delivered in 2015,
- 2 percent for services delivered in 2016,
- 3 percent for services delivered in 2017, and thereafter, potentially a reduction of up to 5 percent beginning in 2018.

Plenty of advice, perhaps too much, is available from experts, consultants and visionary practices who have pioneered EHR use over the past decade. You have, no doubt, heard the reasons for considering an EHR, beyond the stimulus payments now being offered through the HITECH Act. A fully functioning electronic health record (EHR) system brings with it many benefits besides the obvious lucrative enticement. An EHR system decreases human error while improving workflow efficiencies and increasing communication with patients and other providers.

The impact of all this legislation is to make electronic health records a real part of the immediate future of most practices. The primary questions most practices are facing today are, “Which EHR systems should we consider?” and “How do we choose?” Many are concerned with finding an EHR system that will qualify for HITECH payments, reaches capital requirements and is suited to their specialty. Also, with so many technological trends these days, how can you be sure that EHR systems selected today will not become obsolete in a few years? Finally, there are real concerns about lost productivity while installing and learning a new EHR-driven workflow.

The HITECH Act has moved the EHR purchase

# AN EASIER WAY

decision forward for many practices, taking priority over many other pressing issues. That is why Pulse has focused on creating an easier way for practices to accomplish “meaningful use” of a certified EHR.

First, Pulse guarantees its EHR solution will qualify for HITECH EHR 2011 certification. The industry estimates over 300 vendors providing EHR systems, but less than 50 were able to meet the 2008 CCHIT Certification. With the HHS Secretary increasing product demands for 2011 certification, you need to be certain the provider is able to reach government certification demands in order to comply with meaningful use.

In order for an EHR system to qualify for meaningful use, based on final ONC recommendations, the system must provide the user with e-prescribing, prescription benefits, history and routing (SureScripts Solution Provider), drug decision support, electronic receipt of lab data, problem list, quality reporting, and interoperability.

The Pulse focus on creating an easier way spans the entire client relationship; Pulse is focused on making every aspect of the relationship easier. Pulse has created easier ways to buy, install, learn and adopt.

Pulse makes it easier to buy. A medical practice should not have to be an EHR expert to understand their cost proposal, looking for hidden costs not included in the proposal. Pulse Simplicity pricing includes everything needed by most practices in one monthly payment, including licensing fees, maintenance fees, training and implementation, Electronic Data

Interchange (EDI), e-Prescribing fees and more. Pulse Simplicity pricing allows a practice to get started with \$0 down, not large down-payments or deferred balloon payments.

Pulse makes it easier to install. Pulse Project Managers work with each practice to create a custom plan that works for the practice. The Pulse software operates on a single end-to-end solution, requiring less equipment and software, and making it easier to convert existing data into the new solution.

Pulse makes it easier to learn. Pulse uses a combination of on-site and online training programs to create custom role-based learning plans for each practice. Access to a customized online training campus with more than 350 courses provides practices with ongoing free access to training.

Pulse makes it easier to use. Pulse has been dedicated to automating medical practice workflow for more than 20 years, experience that shows in the intuitive nature of the solutions' workflow that is fully customizable to adhere to existing workflow and the way you practice medicine. We also provide unlimited live support via our in-house U.S.-based support desk, which is staffed with experienced, trained problem-solvers, making it easier to get real help when you need it.

Pulse makes it easier to adopt. The Pulse solutions are completely modular, allowing practices to seamlessly build toward a full EHR solution at a pace that is comfortable for their practice. In addition, the Pulse solutions allow for

mixed modes of charting (automated templates, forms, voice recognition, dictation/transcription, written notes, etc.) enabling physicians to adopt the technology in a familiar and easier way.

Pulse makes it easier to connect. The ARRA HITECH funding for interoperability organizations is a critical aspect for HIT adoption success. Providers, hospitals, labs, and payers share patient medical information using a common standard — Continuity of Care Document (CCD) — through local Health Information Exchanges (HIE) and Regional Health Information Organizations (RHIO). Pulse solutions provide Advanced Interoperability with the Continuity of Care Document (CCD), Health Level 7 (HL7) standards, SureScripts Solution Provider status, and HIE and RHIO organizations participation.

In addition to a certification, other important aspects when researching various EHR systems is whether they fully adhere to SureScripts requirements for prescription benefits, history, and routing as well as use the Unified Modeling Language System (UMLS) adopted by the National Library of Medicine (NIH-HHS). Pulse is prepared for the future by being one of 9 SureScripts Solution Providers and one of only 8 utilizing the MEDCIN UMLS.

As thousands of practices face a decision in the coming months, remember that your choice is not just about software, but about the total relationship. If you are not exactly relishing the thought of purchasing and implementing an EHR at your practice, Pulse offers an easier way. **FH**



**BASIL HOURANI** is the President and CEO of Pulse Systems, Inc. Mr. Hourani has been instrumental in the development and incorporation of new ideas, designs and processes into the state-of-the-art Pulse Patient Relationship Management software solution. Pulse's product line includes Practice Management, Electronic Health Records, Revenue Cycle Management, and mobile solutions for physicians and nurses.



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