Does your nursing program adequately prepare students to work with EHRs?

Electronic Health Records (EHRs) are here to stay, and the benefits to healthcare professionals and patients alike are growing every day. If EHRs are so prevalent in today’s healthcare environment, shouldn’t training on this technology be an integral part of your nursing curriculum to ensure your nursing students are ready for the workplace?
The adoption of EHRs among non-federal acute care hospitals is nearly universal. From rural hospitals and critical access hospitals to office-based physicians, having a comprehensive understanding and proficiency with EHRs are a must for today’s nurses.¹

Nearly all reported hospitals have adopted at least a basic EHR system since 2008. A 9-fold increase from 2008.

Nearly all reported hospitals possessed a certified EHR technology in 2015.⁴

Since 2008, office-based physician adoption of an EHR has more than doubled² from 42-87%.

At least 8 out of 10 small, rural, and Critical Access hospitals have adopted a basic EHR.

HOWEVER only 60% of undergraduate nursing programs use EHRs to prepare students for practice.³

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¹ "Adoption of Electronic Health Record Systems among U.S. Non-Federal Acute Care Hospitals 2008-2015" | Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
² "Office-based Physician Electronic Health Record Adoption," Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
⁴ "Adoption of EHRs by U.S. non-Federal Acute Care Hospitals: 2015 Update" | Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
Benefits of EHRs

EHRs are easy to find, search, and update, and provide tools like reminders, alarms, and automated processes that improve clinical accuracy. They allow organizations to minimize the high rate of medical errors occurring throughout the healthcare industry and act as a tool for increasing patient safety and decreasing the overall cost of healthcare.

Benefits of EHRs

- **Nursing Time**: Save 28-36 minutes of time per nurse, per shift
- **AE/ADE Prevention**: Prevent 344-481 ADEs annually
- **Lab Tests & Drug Costs**: 15% Reduction in lab test use and drug cost
- **Order Turnaround Time**: Reduce order turnaround time by at least 1 hour
- **Length Of Stay**: Reduce average lengths of stay by 5-10%
- **Vaccination Compliance**: Ensure 99% compliance with vaccinations

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*“EHR Benefits; EMRs in the Fourth Stage: The Future of Electronic Medical Records Based on the Experience at Intermountain Health Care,” JHIM, 2017*
The use of EHRs and the positive impacts they make on the healthcare industry relies on the ability of nurses to use EHRs effectively and efficiently. But the fact remains that we have a skills gap when it comes to how many nurses are effectively trained on EHRs by the time they get into a work setting.

Nurse managers report the following 13 areas as potential skills gaps among new/novice nurses ("Novice Nurse Preparedness"):  

1. Medication administration documentation
2. Treatment documentation
3. Graphics documentation and tracking
4. Lab results retrieval
5. Diagnostics results retrieval
6. Accessing electronic charts contents
7. Accessing prior admission data
8. Data entry
9. Patient education material retrieval
10. Care plan development and updates
11. Discharge planning documentation and updates
12. Patient education documentation
13. Accessing electronic charts contents

- 94% of nurse educators report increased competition for a shrinking number of clinical sites.
- 68% of nurse faculty report inadequate training on new technologies used in practice (mobile apps, new digital data collection and new electronic health record management tools).
- 70% of nurse managers are unsatisfied with clinical training/exposure of new/novice nurses (compared to 45% of nurse educators).

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It’s now becoming more and more important to implement EHR training into nursing curriculums. It’s no longer just a want, but a core component in nursing classrooms.\(^7\)

### Use of Academic EHRs

Among programs that use an academic EHR:
- 40% say that it is a core component in their curriculum
- 32% plan to make it a more core component

The vast majority said their academic EHR is used in:
- the sim lab: 90%
- skills lab: 84%

More than half reported usage in:
- homework: 69%
- classroom: 59%
- clinicals: 54%

Academic EHRs are used most often in foundational nursing courses, such as:
- Med-Surg: 56%
- Fundamentals: 56%
- Assessment: 47%

Educators who use academic EHRs cite the following attributes as the most attractive:
- Variety of patient scenarios/cases: 60%
- Variety of ready-to-use activities/assignments: 52%
- Barcode Scanning: 52%
- Ease of Grading: 46%

For educators who don’t use an academic EHR, these are 3 of their top priorities when selecting an EHR:
- Ease of use/implementation
- Educationally-focused, enables learning
- Similarity to clinical EHR systems

\(^7\) Lippincott Survey, August 2017