Article: Is Your EMR Built for the Future? 3 Key Considerations

Whether you are actively seeking a new EMR solution or you have one in place, it's important to look beyond the situation at hand and consider a future you can't fully predict. As a veteran IT healthcare professional, I have seen many EMR systems – and many come and go. Here are three key questions that form the backbone of a strong evaluation process.

1. Do the vendor's vision and product development plans align with your strategic plans?

A robust EMR platform goes beyond the existing structure. Does the vendor have the ability to listen to your needs and respond quickly?

A strong platform has a robust user group that helps inform the system's development, as well as a management team that solicits and acts on user input. Ask about the vendor's track record in release cycles. Make sure that system updates are automated across its network of users, and that they don't require new training and re-creation of workflows.

Does the organization have a leadership team that is attuned to the market's needs and proactively anticipating new product development needs? What is their vision for the platform and do they have the willingness and ability to create functionality for the future?

During COVID-19, client Asbury Communities realized they needed a virtual solution for families to stay up to date on their loved ones' status and a way to integrate telehealth. Fortunately, their Netsmart EMR platform had ready-to-go solutions for both. Those capabilities turned out to be critical.

2. Does the platform cover all care settings in an integrated, interoperable, and secure fashion?

It's not uncommon for EMR systems to have built their platform through acquisition of existing competitors. Make sure that what claims to be a fully-integrated system actually is – and that it covers all levels of living and care settings.

The user interface should be the same regardless of whether you are working with independent living or someone in rehab or someone in assisted living. Your caregivers will quickly become frustrated if they need to log in multiple times and learn different user conventions. This affects consistency of record-keeping, adoption, user satisfaction, and resident satisfaction.

How are they prepared for interoperability? A strong vendor will have a sophisticated API that has a pre-built architecture for easy, secure integration with your local hospitals.
Finally, a modern EMR needs a cloud-based architecture and a strong cyber-security firewall. Your organization bears responsibility for security, too, by ensuring your network is well-protected. Think of your EMR as a fortified castle with your network as the moat around it.

3. Do you have the right technology architecture to support your organizational needs?

The best software in the world will wreak havoc if it is not implemented correctly – and that may require infrastructure development. Cyber-security is one such component that is key to successfully implementing any new IT business solution.

Is your IT infrastructure ready to support your EMR and related healthcare applications like telehealth? Having a rock-solid IT foundation means having the requisite bandwidth, strong WiFi and a plan for full coverage, and multiple layers of security including ID management.

One certainty is that the world and your business needs will change. If you are planning a move to the cloud in the future, that's where your EMR needs to reside – and the future starts now.

CTA: Call us today at XXX-XXX-XXXX, and we'll schedule a free consultation on your EMR needs. Asbury Integrated Technologies is a strategic, full-service partner with more than 30 years in the senior living industry and a strong background in EMR assessment and implementation. We provide:

- Full MSP services in a secure, cloud environment
- Tech Assessment to review current state
- Bolster current infrastructure, security, Wifi
- Develop Tech Roadmap
- Host core apps (Office 360 etc.) in secure, cloud data center
- Integration and migration
- Legacy Support
- Strategic Advisory: Third party search and selection of full solution