Specialty Task Force: A Strategic Component to Electronic Health Record (EHR) Optimization

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Abstract. Post-implementation stage comes after an electronic health record (EHR) deployment. Analyst and end users deal with the reality that some of the concepts and designs initially planned and created may not be complementary to the workflow; creating anxiety, dissatisfaction, and failure with early adoption of system. Problems encountered during deployment are numerous and can vary from simple to complex. Redundant ticket submission creates backlog for Information Technology personnel resulting in delays in resolving concerns with EHR system.

The process of optimization allows for evaluation of system and reassessment of users' needs. A solid and well executed optimization infrastructure can help minimize unexpected end-user disruptions and help tailor the system to meet regulatory agency goals and practice standards. A well device plan to resolve problems during post implementation is necessary for cost containment and to streamline communication efforts. Creating a specialty specific collaborative task force is efficacious and expedites resolution of users' concerns through a more structured process.

Keywords. optimization, task force, specialty, collaborative

1. Introduction

Post-implementation stage comes after an electronic health record (EHR) deployment. This phase addresses the challenging tasks of resolving concerns encountered with the newly implemented system. Optimization is the process of evaluating and enhancing a system after users' feedback and to keep the system compliant with regulatory agency requirements and practice standards.

Problems encountered during and after an EHR deployment are numerous and can vary from simple to complex. Redundant ticket submission creates backlog for Information Technology (IT) personnel resulting in delays in resolving concerns with electronic health record system. Resolution of submitted tickets and request for upgrades is dependent upon availability of IT personnel and an organized processing system. During optimization, one of the most common concerns expressed by end users is the rate of response in improving functionality. Analysts are restricted from deploying enhancement without authorization by managerial or administrative staff. Ineffective decision making process creates inefficiency during the optimization period.

Aim/Purpose

- Develop a systematic approach to expedite resolution of problems encountered with documentation system
- Streamline system wide decision making process, avoiding delays in approving changes

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2. Method

The University of Colorado Health System Perianesthesia Department created a specialty specific task force to address issues and concerns encountered with software application. A charter was drawn that defined goals, role expectation and task force guidelines. Membership was open to analysts, managers, educators, clinical experts and end users. Other services such as pharmacy and risk management were invited if the topic of concern needed some clarification.

A 90 minute monthly meeting was held utilizing audio and video conferencing to accommodate institutions that were remotely located. Members were responsible for disseminating information to end users.

3. Results

A survey was conducted to determine if the P4G Task Force met the set goals. The results indicated that having a specialty specific task force during optimization was beneficial. An analyst involvement in the task force helped in streamlining the process of addressing problems. A 90 minute meeting is complimentary to the members' schedule. The task force improved communication process from administrative level to clinicians. Patient safety is addressed through rapid resolution of EHR concerns.

4. Discussion

EMR optimization is a continuous and important process for any EHR systems. Creation of an specialty specific optimization task force ensures efficiency in dealing with end users problems, regulatory agency requirements and practice standards Team members must come from various departmental roles to expedite decision making support. This enables prompt deployment of enhancements improving patient safety and users' satisfaction.

5. Acknowledgments

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