TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EHR GO-LIVE

How to prepare for your upcoming Go-Live.

Electronic Health Records (EHRs) are available in almost every healthcare setting for organizations of all sizes. EHRs started emerging in the 1960s and 1970s, but in the 1980s the value of these systems became more widely understood. Within the last decade, we have seen the adoption of EHR systems take off and the enormous benefits of these systems realized by both healthcare organizations and patients alike. While there are various vendors and benefits of each system, the one consistency with all vendors is the change that they bring to the organizations that adopt them.

Whether going live with a brand new EHR or adding on to your existing system, it can be a stressful time for all involved, including the end users. Your team will be working and spending time prior to launch on the building and testing of the system, incorporating your SME feedback, and training end users. However, no matter how much you prepare, go-live is bound to be demanding. Below are 10 tips to help make your launch date more successful and your end users feel supported.

10 TIPS FOR PREPARING FOR GO-LIVE:

- **Prepare for things to not be perfect -** nothing ever is! On launch day and the days and weeks following, there will continue to be a stream of tickets and calls for necessary changes, be prepared. Given the magnitude of the change impacting your organization, issues are completely normal. No launch is without problems, so do not let a few issues keep you from deeming your go-live as a success.

- **Create a plan to quickly triage issues -** as mentioned, there will always be issues. Work with your IT team to determine how you will receive and triage issues, with common examples being a ticketing system or a go-live hotline. Create an efficient way for the team to claim an issue and for this to be viewable team wide. Require the resolution for all issues to be documented. This documentation will be helpful for duplicate or similar problems.

- **Invest in support for your end users -** providing floor support with expertise in the unique workflows and system can be extremely beneficial. Staff will appreciate the ability to quickly ask questions and receive a live demonstration. This will save the end users time and frustration in finding the answer or making a call which is more time they can spend focusing on their patients. Floor support can be part of the IT team, the clinical team, or even consultants familiar with the workflow.

- **Make training materials readily available -** regardless of the amount of training prior to launch, it is a completely new experience when working with real patient data. It is beneficial to have the training materials on an internal intranet or shared drive so they can be accessed electronically the week of launch and beyond. It is also valuable to have paper copies on the floor so they are easily available as a refresher.

- **Provide open communication channels -** this goes for your IT team, floor support, and end users. As an IT team, you need to be able to communicate on issue questions, triaging, and frequent check-ins. The floor support will need to chat with each other for issue questions on the floor or identifying issue patterns, but also will need a

quick way to reach the IT team for easily resolvable issues. If end users do not have access to floor support, they need to be able to document issues and ask questions quickly to make sure they can continue focusing on patient care.

- **Set-up specific work shifts -** it can get hectic for the team and taking a break is very important for everyone. It can be easy for team members to get caught up in issues and calls, so make sure to have shifts so that each member of the team is working a standard number of hours. Also, set up designated breaks in the day for people to get up and clear their minds, stretch their legs, and get some water. If doing overnight shifts and extended support, make sure to break up and rotate shifts.

- **Remember it is a marathon -** once you are live, the work does not end there. It will be a few weeks before things fully settle and every end user has gotten the opportunity to jump into the system. Plan in advance when able and try to take things one day at a time. EHRs are not a static system, they require continuous effort and improvements and your team will continue to learn and make updates in order to be successful.

- **Be patient with the IT team and end users -** this is new to a lot of people. It can be hard as tickets are rolling in or there are repeat questions going through, but this is a learning experience for both end users and the IT team. Remember to take a deep breath and remain patient, this will help the team learn the system more and keep spirits high.

- **Have fun -** go-live is exciting and a huge accomplish! There has been a lot of time and resources that have gone into preparing for launch day for both enterprise and add-on go-lives. The team has put in a lot of effort and this new system is going to help your end users provide better care for their patients. There is a lot to celebrate.

- **Bring snacks -** given everything going on, the team may not think of this. I have been at several go-lives where people say they have forgotten to eat. There is so much work being done and keeping up energy levels is so important. Make sure to incorporate healthy snacks, but the team is bound to appreciate some tasty treats as well.

These tips are meant to help and guide you through a busy and exciting time for your organization. However, remember these are only tips for the go-live itself. Leading up to launch you will want to engage in several readiness activities like training, dress rehearsals, and technical checklists. If you are interested in support for your EHR implementation, go-live readiness, or go-live itself, please contact a Trexin Advisor.

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