

11 CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SWITCHING OPHTHALMOLOGY EHR SYSTEMS

Thinking about making the switch to a new electronic health record (EHR) system?

As healthcare continues to move forward at an exponential rate, it can prove challenging to keep up while simultaneously providing your patients with quality care.

Here are some of the top factors to consider when evaluating EHR systems to help make the right decision for your ophthalmology practice in the ever-changing healthcare landscape.

Call 561.235.7502 or visit modmed.com/ophthalmology for details.

1. EVALUATE YOUR PRACTICE'S NEEDS

Ask yourself and key stakeholders these questions.

How many providers and additional users will utilize the system? Will a current staff member have the resources to help with the implementation process or will you have to consider hiring someone? How much training will your team need to truly succeed? Knowing your practice's answers to these questions ahead of time will help prepare you for the decision-making process ahead.



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2. ASSESS TIMING AND YOUR RESOURCES

The right time to move forward can vary from practice to practice.

Budget, resource availability and other office logistics can play a role. Building a consensus among stakeholders may prove challenging, but don't let that prevent you from exploring new systems that can help save time, decrease spend and exceed expectations. Changing compliance regulations and the transition to value-based care have resulted in the need for advanced technology, particularly when it comes to your EHR system.

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3. LOOK FOR AN OPHTHALMOLOGY-SPECIFIC EHR SYSTEM

One size does not fit all.

Using an EHR system designed for a general practitioner or podiatrist won't fit your workflow if you're an ophthalmologist. Look for a system with [built-in ophthalmic knowledge](#) available at your fingertips. A system with an adaptive learning engine can learn your specific workflow and preferences, saving you valuable time with each patient.



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4. DECIDE IF YOU WANT A CLOUD-BASED SYSTEM

Consider making the transition from a server-based system to the cloud.

A true cloud software as a service (SaaS) solution is much more scalable than a server-based model. The cloud can eliminate the need to purchase additional EHR servers, workstation licenses or hiring additional staff to manage hardware which can help save money.

The mobility and freedom of a cloud-based EHR system can help you manage your practice from virtually anywhere and at any time as long as you have a secure internet connection.



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5. CONSIDER COSTS

With all the options out there, a variety of price ranges exist.

When it comes to ophthalmology software and technology in general, you get what you pay for. You have to know what you are willing to spend and realize it's a long-term investment that should benefit your practice's health for years to come. Not utilizing the right software or opting for the "cheapest" option may cost you more—and not just financially—in the long run.

Think of it as your OCT or visual field machine. The cheapest may "work" but you probably prefer working with the best. Don't get caught up in trying to spend more upfront to "own" software. With continual government mandates about what your EHR system has to do, you will soon find yourself with an outdated system and pay a bundle to upgrade your software, hence another benefit of a true cloud-based platform.

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6. LEARN ABOUT THE COMPANY'S HISTORY

Seek out a company that has a proven track record of success.

Get a glimpse into a [company's history](#), from who founded it, to financial stability, ownership and other meaningful milestones along the way. Industry articles and company-issued press releases serve as great historical information to reference.

Both technology and healthcare are ever-changing industries and when you mix the two together, the changes become exponential. When evaluating EHR vendors, look for a company that exhibits a history of product improvements and enhancements and truly values client feedback. A forward-thinking company should plan ahead for industry changes. Seek out a company that has a proven track record of success and has received recognition from [third-party sources](#). This can add to a company's credibility.



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7. SET UP A DEMO AND ATTEND OPHTHALMOLOGY CONFERENCES

The old adage “seeing is believing” rings true.

Take the time to further investigate the EHR platforms that pique your interest. [Schedule demos](#)—either web-based or in-person—with several vendors so you can evaluate the pros and cons of each system. Comparing EHR systems to your current system can help you make a more informed decision. Industry conferences provide in-person opportunities to learn more about EHR systems you’re considering and give you the chance to meet members of the company which may factor into your decision.



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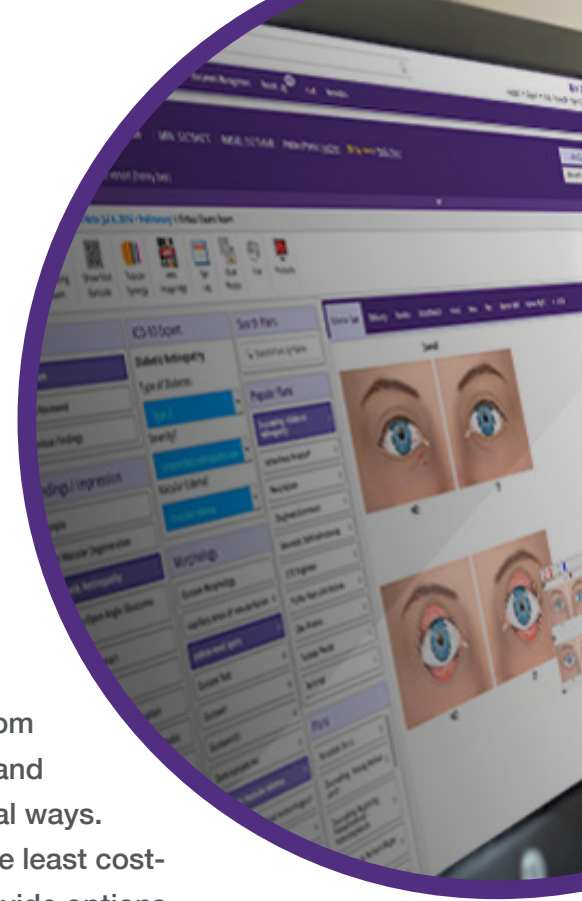
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8. FIND OUT ABOUT TRANSFERRING EXISTING DATA

Don't let a data transfer prevent you from pursuing a new EHR system.

You may have concerns about how to transfer the data from your current EHR system to a new one, but data transfer and retention occur often. This process can be handled several ways. A full conversion of data may seem ideal, but it may be the least cost-effective and unnecessary. Look for a vendor that can provide options. Realize that once you move past any data challenges, you will have moved on to a better system, the benefits of which should outweigh your initial concerns around data transfer.



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9. ASK ABOUT TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Having access to a skilled team through both online and in-person trainings—plus one that can provide guidance on compliance—will prove invaluable.

Make sure the vendor you select offers robust [training and support](#) options and that they can help you every step of the way, even if it's years down the road when you need additional assistance and guidance. Some companies have an IT team who trains clients, but access to team members with real-world clinical experience in ophthalmology can differentiate one vendor from another.



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10. CONNECT WITH CURRENT CLIENTS

Like what you saw from a demo? Take the next step.

Ask to schedule a phone conversation, or better yet, visit a practice to see how the EHR works not just in theory but in a clinical setting. Hearing directly from your peers will help to answer questions and may even spark new ones.



Since codes are generated automatically, our documentation is much more accurate, so we not only save money, but also earn more. There's no question that EMA has raised the bar for EHR systems.

Alan Malouf, MD
Malouf Eye Center



I've been using Modernizing Medicine's Practice Management system, and everything is now seamless and extremely efficient. When an appointment is created, it registers a patient and sets the stage for billing simultaneously.

Sarah Baroody, MD
Eye Care of Danbury, LLC



Within one month of using EMA, we were at 108% of productivity which warranted that we had made the right decision.

Don Abrams, MD
Krieger Eye Institute



With the iPad capability, I finish the note before seeing my next patient; it's that quick and easy to use.

Elson Lai, MD
Rosemead Eye Center

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11. ASK AN EHR VENDOR THESE QUESTIONS

Ready to move on?

You should hear a resounding ‘yes’ on the questions below from your new, potential EHR company. This list is just a start. Note the shortcomings and frustrations with your current EHR system, and make sure you address those properly, too.

- Is the EHR designed for ophthalmology? And can it accommodate sub-specialties such as cataract and refractive, glaucoma, retina, oculoplastics and pediatrics?
- Does it have diagnoses, treatment options and coding functionality needed for ophthalmology?
- Does it meet the workflow requirements of your practice?
- Can you touch and swipe on an iPad interface instead of typing or having to use a desktop computer?
- Will it enable you to address changes in the industry including the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS)?
- Does it provide you with mobile access from virtually any location with a secure internet connection?
- Is it a true cloud-based platform?
- Does the company offer an all-in-one solution including an analytics platform, practice management solution and revenue cycle management service?
- Do they offer patient engagement tools like a patient portal and an iPad check-in kiosk?
- Is the support team based in the U.S. with accessibility during standard office hours?
- Are they responsive to customer needs?
- Is the company stable and does it have a positive reputation?
- Do they continue to develop and enhance their products and value client feedback?

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At the end of the day, you want to select a healthcare technology vendor that can help you during your transition from your current EHR system, so you can return to taking care of your patients with more freedom and flexibility.

Want to learn more? Request a personalized demo.

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