

# Information Technology Case Studies

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President Obama stated that one central issue to the country's future is healthcare. Within the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, \$19 billion has been invested in computerized medical records that will help to reduce costs and improve quality while insuring patients' privacy.

The transition to electronic health records (EHRs), which Obama urges to be complete within the next five years, has united companies and healthcare facilities that are willing accept the challenge of change. The day for EHRs is here. Standards have been coordinated, structural design is planned, the only barrier is political. While some remain skeptical, others have embraced this change and present case studies to show IT implementation as a success, allowing care coordination, improvement, better healthcare value (reduced cost, enhanced quality) and create job revenue.

## Transition from Paper to EHRs: A ProVation Medical Case Study

### Problem

Facilitating the widespread adoption of health information technology – electronic health record (EHR) systems in particular – has become the battle cry in the quest to transform the nation's healthcare system to improve access to and quality of care while reducing costs.

### Solution

Thanks to recent market changes, the time for ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) to begin making the transition to a paperless environment is now. More health information technology (HIT) vendors have introduced systems and applications tailored to the unique needs of the ASC. Subscription-based services are also growing in popularity, meaning ASCs can tap into the benefits of going paperless without making a sizable upfront capital investment.

Often, the most significant savings from an EHR are realized from the elimination of costs related to paper charts. Other savings are derived from the elimination of paper supplies, costs associated with off-site storage and retrieval fees, as well as a redirection of clerical staff. The workflow and process improvements made possible by EHRs can have a direct impact on an ASC's bottom line, including increased patient throughput, faster revenue cycles and increased revenues. At one ProVation client site, the elimination of paper and printing costs netted an annual cost savings of more than \$26,000, while a reduction in off-site storage fees created an additional ongoing annual savings of \$12,000. The site also saves up to two hours per day previously lost to pulling, copying and managing patient charts, and an additional three hours per day previously spent entering registration information. While financial benefits are a critical factor in any IT investment, achieving compliance in documentation and clinical practice is equally important. As Joint Commission and Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC) standards become more stringent, the EHR becomes an important tool in achieving and proving compliance and standards of care. EHRs can generate safety alerts, record safety measures taken, and significantly streamline the gathering of data and documentation should an audit occur.

### Conclusion

In the past, a lack of appropriate EHR offerings and high upfront costs left many ASCs cold to the idea of transitioning to a paperless environment. However, with more vendor offerings specifically addressing their unique needs and more attention being paid to the benefits of broader HIT adoption, the time to eliminate paper from the care process is now.

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