


# Physician Briefing Series | Electronic Medical Records (EMR)

Utilizing an integrated EMR that benefits physicians and patients



## Physician Briefing Series | Electronic Medical Records (EMR)



From healthcare reform to the economy to spiraling malpractice costs, these are difficult and uncertain times. For independent practitioners, it's a daily struggle to manage a practice, keep up with paperwork and battle with insurance companies.

In this environment, we believe the NorthShore University HealthSystem Medical Group offers physicians the best opportunity to achieve improved personal economics and long-term stability and security - all in an environment that provides the infrastructure, tools and support necessary for physicians to leave behind the hassles of managing a practice and focus on what they do best: caring for patients.

One of those tools is our top-notch electronic medical records (EMR) system. It offers benefits that simply can't be duplicated with the off-the-shelf EMR "solutions" often implemented by independent practices. And it's a big part of what makes the NorthShore Medical Group a better place to practice.

I invite you to read further and to share this information with others you think might be interested in what we have to offer.

**Joseph Golbus, MD**

*President, NorthShore University HealthSystem Medical Group*

---

### The Future is EMR...

"We will make the immediate investments necessary to ensure that within five years all of America's medical records are computerized."

*– President Barack Obama, January 9, 2009*

### And Now for the Tricky Part...

"Only about 8% of the nation's 5,000 hospitals and 17% of its 800,000 physicians currently use the kind of common computerized record-keeping systems that Obama envisions for the whole nation."

*– CNN, January 12, 2009*

## Expectations vs. Reality

**Most everyone agrees that electronic medical records are an inevitable part of every physician's future.**

Already, billions of dollars in federal stimulus funds are being directed toward encouraging their use. And hospitals and private practices across the country are scrambling to implement EMR technology.

But studies cited by the American Medical Association have shown that 30 percent of practices either stop using or remove altogether their systems within just a year of installation. Smaller practices face an especially difficult time, as leaner operating margins make the financial and productivity investment tougher to absorb.

Add a dizzying array of options on the market, a steep learning curve, the difficulty of integrating a system into a practice's existing workflows, and the inevitable glitches that come with any new technology, and it's no wonder so many practices have a hard time implementing an EMR.

## Multiple Challenges, One Solution

NorthShore is one of a handful of hospital systems with medical records that are fully electronic and fully integrated across all outpatient, inpatient and ancillary sites. Our state-of-the-art Epic technology is in use by 100 percent of our physicians, nurses and other medical professionals.

And it successfully addresses the many headaches and hassles practitioners face in procuring, installing, maintaining and upgrading a system, including those noted below.

## EMR Implementation and Maintenance

**Challenge:** The upfront cost is prohibitively expensive.

**Our Solution:** Implementing an EMR system can cost tens of thousands of dollars depending on the size of the practice. But physicians who join NorthShore Medical Group enjoy a fully operational, battle-tested EMR at no cost.

**Challenge:** EMR involves a steep learning curve.

**Our Solution:** Any new technology comes with a learning curve, but it's especially difficult when you're going it alone. NorthShore Medical Group provides comprehensive support that includes one-on-one help from expert trainers, online courses, even pre-built templates from other physicians to make the transition smoother.

**Challenge:** We can't afford the impact on office efficiency and staff productivity.

**Our Solution:** We provide your staff with all the training, tools, systems and support necessary to minimize the impact on your practice.

**Challenge:** EMR requires constant maintenance and tech support.

**Our Solution:** Supporting a sophisticated EMR system for any size practice can be a difficult and costly endeavor. As a longtime technology leader and an early adopter of EMR, NorthShore employs a full complement of technology specialists and trainers whose job it is to keep the system running smoothly and make the user experience as friendly and simple as possible.

## Enhancements to Your Clinical Practice

**Challenge:** This is one more burden that cuts into my patient and personal time.

**Our Solution:** Being part of a health system actually multiplies the time-saving benefits of the EMR:

- Our physicians can share patient information in real-time with practice partners and specialists.
- They can even directly enter appointments into specialists' calendars, including requests for urgent appointments – all without having to pick up the phone.
- And Medical Group physicians can rest easier when away from the office, knowing that their patients are covered by colleagues who have access to their patients' full health history.

**Challenge:** An EMR will not help my personal economics.

**Our Solution:** Our EMR helps us to optimize allowable reimbursement while demonstrating compliance with government regulations and targets, in several ways:

- It reduces coding errors, helping ensure procedures are properly billed and physicians are compensated fully for services performed. Plus our staff of coding professionals provides support to ensure all revenues are captured.
- The system automatically confirms patient eligibility with their health plan, minimizing costly delays and repeat submission of claims.
- It allows us to track and report PQRI and Pay for Performance quality measures using automated templates, rather than manual systems.
- The system also includes E-Prescribing.



**Challenge:** It's impossible to customize a system to meet my "real-life" needs.

**Our Solution:** Many practitioners find standalone products create myriad unanticipated impacts on office workflow. As an early EMR pioneer, we've been working since 2003 with Epic's developers to create a customized system that conforms to the real-world experiences of our physicians and staff. As a result, our EMR works for us, rather than demanding that we adjust to it.

**Challenge:** It's not integrated with other services and systems.

**Our Solution:** Our EMR is fully integrated across the continuum of patient care:

- It spans all four of our hospitals and 75-plus primary and specialty practice locations, encompassing all services, including inpatient, outpatient, ancillary, medical tests and prescriptions, along with billing, scheduling, E-prescribing and other systems.
- Physicians can share patient information, documentation and medical opinions seamlessly, securely, and quickly to expedite medical care.



## Enhancements to the Patient Experience

**Challenge:** I don't see how the EMR benefits my patients.

**Our Solution:** We've enhanced our EMR with several features specifically for patients:

- Our secure patient portal, NorthShoreConnect, allows patients to view their medical records, receive test results, renew prescriptions, communicate with physicians and schedule appointments from their home computer.
- Our system also delivers health alerts and reminders for needed services and connects patients directly with online education resources.
- It improves clinical workflows, saving time for physicians and staff, and improving patient loyalty.
- Patients have the option of saving their medical record on a thumb drive so that key health information is readily at hand when they travel.
- And our system enables physicians to provide an "After Visit Summary" to patients at the conclusion of a visit, a very popular tool that summarizes key findings, follow-up appointments, and next steps in the care plan.

**Bottom Line:** *When you combine the customized, fully integrated technology of our EMR with the expertise, infrastructure support, and extensive experience of a major medical group in using the tool to benefit both patients and physicians, you get an EMR system that cannot be matched by "off-the-shelf" products. It's just one of many advantages to practicing with NorthShore Medical Group.*

## NorthShore: A Technology Leader (So You Don't Have to Be!)

Practicing in a group that is at the forefront of technology allows our physicians to focus on what they do best – caring for patients. Among the recognition we've received for our leadership:

- NorthShore was recognized in 2009 as one of only two hospital systems in the nation to have achieved full EMR implementation. Presented by the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, which is leading the healthcare industry's national efforts to enhance quality through health care information technology, the Stage 7 Award honors best practices in operating in a paperless environment.
- NorthShore Medical Group received the 2009 HealthLeaders Media Top Leadership Teams in Healthcare Award for Medical Groups, recognizing the culture of physician leadership, customer loyalty and data-driven decision making that supports ongoing success and continued focus on being the best place to practice medicine and the best place to receive care.
- NorthShore Medical Group was named the 2008 AMGA Acclaim Award Honoree, an award recognizing demonstrated excellence in providing effective, efficient, timely, equitable and patient-centered care (the six Aims of the Institute of Medicine), innovations that were built off of our advanced EMR platform.
- For six consecutive years, NorthShore was named one of the nation's "Most Wired" healthcare systems by Hospitals and Health Networks magazine.
- NorthShore regularly ranks among the 25 most wireless hospital systems in the nation, according to Hospitals and Health Networks magazine.

## Physician Testimonials



“The great thing about our EMR system is it’s essentially a multi-specialty group without walls. You function as if everyone’s together in the same building, getting real-time information – from test results to specialist visits – instantly.”

– *Norman Gutmann, MD*



“Our Epic system is no doubt worlds above any standalone system you could get in private practice.”

– *Timothy Poland, MD*



“My patients love it. They have 24/7 access to their records, they can make appointments, get test results. The system has actually helped us improve patient communication, while also saving us time.”

– *Donna Bicknese, MD*



“I’m a late arrival to using computers. But I can find my way around Epic after exceptional training and the time to practice learning the system.”

– *Wolf D. Peddinghaus, MD*

NorthShore Medical Group – a better place to practice.