

Why Does a Behavioral Health Practice Need an Electronic Health Record?

In healthcare today, electronic health records (EHR) are an invaluable tool in providing and documenting patient care. They are also one of the largest investments a behavioral health organization may make. What are some clear benefits to making EHRs part of your patient care strategy? And what key elements should an EHR offer?

Ease of Access

One of the easily visible reasons for choosing a good EHR is the ease of access it provides to patient records. Documentation can be done right at the point of care, keeping records up-to-date and legible. Reviewing important historic information easily while providing assessment and interventions is also easier. Sharing information between providers within the organization is streamlined. Even integrating outside records or securely sharing data with insurance companies, pharmacies, and outside providers to coordinate care is simpler. When choosing EHR software, you'll want a product that is universally recognized and utilized by other organizations to facilitate communication between systems.

Security, Reliability, and Accuracy

Along with this ease of access comes greater accuracy and reliability. Errors are reduced. Key data points that are important for the organization to capture, such as complete documentation accurately reflecting Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) measures, can be consistently addressed from one care provider to the next. Choosing an EHR that is adaptable to whatever documentation needs you may have is essential.

HIPAA compliance with secure records and an ability to see how and why records are accessed within the practice is also easier with the right EHR. It has never been more important or urgent to reduce exposure to liability and penalties for breaching patient confidentiality than it is today. This includes ensuring sensitive non-medical patient data is secure.

Cost Reduction

EHRs that are accessible, fast, and allow a practice to establish consistent documentation practices, also increase efficiency and productivity. This is a valuable part of any practice's cost-saving strategies and allows providers to meet business goals more easily. You'll want data for more accurate coding and billing to be easily extracted from your EHR as well. This avoids costly errors and potential fines and ensures all revenue is captured.

Better Patient Care

All of these benefits of EHRs ultimately allow for better patient care. Clear communication between providers and documentation that is easier to read and find helps with diagnosis and treatment plans. Reduction in errors and efficiency in prescribing medications, coordinating care, and following up on previous visits means consistency for clients. Lastly, avoiding duplication of services like lab testing reduces costs to patients and increases convenience.

EHRs Meet All Your Goals

It's easy to see how all the above elements benefit your behavioral health organization. Accuracy, reliability, security, efficiency, and better patient care all mean a solid electronic health record has a return that is many times greater than the investment. As part of offering cutting-edge care that sets your organization apart, an EHR with these elements can help you meet your care goals on multiple levels.