

Considerations in the Selection of Technologies that Support Camp Healthcare Services*

Futurists predict that camps will have compelling interests and benefits for utilizing electronic health records within the next three to five years. Some camps are already using electronic records and incorporating technologies in a myriad of ways to support camp healthcare. Camp professionals have asked for more information about selecting appropriate technologies to support camp health services. Based in part on efforts from the American Academy of Pediatrics**, the following list of considerations identifies topics that should be considered and questions that should be asked. The list also addresses situations in which a camp's winter office is on a different location than the summer office and potential pitfalls surrounding a camp's integration of technology and/or software with their healthcare systems.

CONSIDERATION #1: PEOPLE, PROCESS, TECHNOLOGY

- It is very important to understand that technology is just a tool. Software is not in itself going to organize an unorganized process.
- Camps need to define which people are responsible for which processes to make your camp health system successful. For example, who is responsible for reviewing health forms to identify potential medical issues like food allergies prior to the arrival of campers? What is the process to communicate this information with appropriate staff—kitchen, counselors, and so on.
- Is the organization prepared to provide the appropriate staff with sufficient training and related resources?

CONSIDERATION #2: USABILITY

- Is the software intuitive?
- Does it require a lot of training?
- Does it fit into the workflow of your camp? NOTE: Sometimes it is necessary and preferred to re-think and re-engineer workflows to take advantage of new tools for increased efficiencies.

CONSIDERATION #3: MOBILITY

- Are there limitations to where it can be used?
- Can it be accessed and effectively used and/or adapted for use with mobile devices such as iPads?

CONSIDERATION #4: FUNCTIONALITY

- What do you want the software to do? What are your current pain points?
- Are there assessment, intervention, and evaluation data entry points?
- Do not depend solely on the sales pitch of the vendor.

* Developed by the ACA Healthy Camp Education and Monitoring Program Advisory Committee.

** American Academy of Pediatrics. (2007). Special requirements of electronic health record systems in pediatrics. *Pediatrics*, 119, 631-637; AAP Child Health Informatics Center- www2.aap.org/chic/; AAP Electronic Medical Record Review Site- www.aapcocit.org/emr/.

CONSIDERATION #5: INTEROPERABILITY

- Can the software “talk” with other systems with minimal effort?
- Does data have to be re-entered that is already in another system? For example, do camper demographics and cabin assignments need to be re-entered into the medical software system?

CONSIDERATION #6: STANDARDIZED CODESETS AND TERMINOLOGIES

- Does the software complement existing national documentation standards (for diagnoses, medications, allergies, immunizations, and so on) of the healthcare professional(s) working in the camp’s health center? Such standards are relevant to interoperability, support clinical decision making, and can provide a legally defensive framework.
- How would updated information be added to the system (new diagnoses, new medications, changes in immunization schedules) so it is consistent and accessible to camps?

CONSIDERATION #7: DATA INPUT FROM PARENTS

- How does the software facilitate the collection of information that is being supplied by parents? Online forms? Scanning? Electronic transmission from doctor's offices or personal health records??

CONSIDERATION #8: PRIVACY, SECURITY, AND HIPAA CONSIDERATIONS

- Who has access to the data? Is this access audited?
- Is health data disclosed to other sources or systems? Are these disclosures tracked? Is this one system or a combination of programs that build on one another allowing “access” at different levels (i.e., demographic access for clerical staff, full access for healthcare staff)?
- Who “owns” the data if the software is Web-based or if the data is stored in the “cloud”? What can be done with it? How is the security of Web-based software protected?

CONSIDERATION #9: PORTABILITY OF RECORDS

- Having need to access information from multiple locations suggests the potential to utilize Web-based solutions.

CONSIDERATION #10: MAINTENANCE OF HARD COPIES OF RECORDS/REDUNDANCY/DOWNTIME PROCEDURES

- Does the camp have a secondary backup of data electronically in the event a system “crashes” and data is lost?
- If one implements an electronic health record system, determine how electronic records/reports will be archived in case information needs to be retrieved some years in the future.
- Consider threats to the computer-based system, especially those—like a power outage—that make the system unusable or of limited use. Then develop and implement work processes that limit the impact of those threats; review/update the processes as needed.
- Recognize the importance of maintaining hard copies of records as one source of backup/redundancy.

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