

Using the EHR to unlock the next big thing

As electronic health records take root, operators are probing new ways to advance both knowledge and care

By John Hall

It's easy to see why the electronic health record attracts so much attention from operators and clinicians. In the age of resident-centered care, the EHR is the documentation hub — the living record — that chronicles every facet of residents' changing health, and every caregiving touchpoint.

The perfusion of tech in this sector is not as surprising as the rate at which it's being adopted, as seen in practically every category monitored each year in the annual LeadingAge Ziegler 150 study, which analyzes the nation's largest 150 not-for-profit senior living providers. Ziegler's most recent compilation found 84% of operators have now adopted EHRs, in tandem with similar adoption rates in point-of-care documentation technology.

With most adoption issues under their belts, skilled nursing facilities now are focusing on more sophisticated technologies around electronic referral management, analytics and connectivity, whereas assisted living and home care settings now are delving deeply into interoperability issues, experts say.

Innovation and evolution have been swift.

"The first generation of EHR solutions, many still in use today, did little more than move the



EHRs allow operators to gain unprecedented clinical insights.

maturation of machine-learning toolsets. "This provides incredible potential to vastly improve the efficiency and quality of care," he adds. "Leveraging the targeted application of deep machine learning to both structured and unstructured data in a comprehensive personal health record can provide a means to identify early indicators for a change in condition and opportunities for intervention." ■

paper from the manila folder in the physical filing cabinet into the virtual manila folder in the electronic filing cabinet," observes John Damgaard, president and CEO of MatrixCare. "The electronic health record was literally comprised of little more than scanned images of paper documents. Even the user interfaces were built to replicate existing paper-based forms.

"The focus was squarely on data entry, and the result was an end-user experience that was difficult at best," he adds.

But things have changed in the newest generations of EHR systems.

"Today's EHRs are a significant improvement over earlier systems," Damgaard adds.

"Human factors engineering has been applied to user interfaces to improve their intuitiveness and efficiency and lower training requirements. Multi-dimensional analytics tools are used to identify variance in key process and outcome measures. Clinical decision support — driven by episodic discrete data and logical rules and expressions — are used to coach care decisions in line with the validated standard of care for the combination of a given population segment and its changing conditions. Care coordination tools are employed to focus the full care team on the patient and progress against the care plan. This combination of capabilities represents the state-of-the-art in deployed EHR technology."

With the thorniest implementation issues now under their belts, facility managers can look forward to a host of exciting innovations.

Those include significant increases in the capability of top-tier cloud computing environments to manage big data environments and in the

Three Tips

1 As America continues the migration to value-based care and as long-term post-acute care networks continue to narrow, outcomes performance will become the ultimate determinant of success or failure. Tapping into the power of data analytics can help you get a true assessment of where their strengths lie.

2 Referral management software can help providers understand which types of services are profitable for them and which are not, as well as help them identify their best referral sources. By marketing their organizations' strengths, they can attract the right kinds of referrals and minimize those that may not be a good fit.

3 Seek technology partners committed to interoperability — so they can facilitate the exchange of data necessary for a truly comprehensive personal health record.

EXCLUSIVE EHR SPONSOR

MatrixCare
Integrated Care. Better Outcomes.

WWW.MATRIXCARE.COM