

## **Analyzing your workflow: A key to EHR success**

The first step in any successful EHR implementation is preparation. Before you select a vendor or write that first check, it's important to understand what you want your EHR to do, and how it will help your practice run more smoothly.

One of the best ways to do that is to conduct a workflow analysis. The AMA offers these recommendations:

- Ask everyone in your practice to make a list of their daily tasks and duties. Ask them to identify which tasks are tedious or repetitive, and then rank them by complexity.
- Make a master list of everything your practice currently does on a daily, weekly and monthly basis; use this list to evaluate software.
- Calculate completion times for each task; understand which tasks could easily become electronic.
- Identify if new tasks will be required with a new system, and who will take care of these new tasks.
- Create diagrams of how information flows throughout your practice. With an EHR, everyone has access to patient records simultaneously. How will this change the flow of tasks from person to person? Will some tasks become obsolete?
- Conduct a few model patient visits. Identify snags and slowdowns – walk the charts through each handoff and document where modifications are needed.

Source: American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians