Changes in Pa. Law Eases Countersignature Requirements for Physician Assistants

By Anna Bamonte Torrance

Recent amendments to the Pennsylvania Medical and Osteopathic Practice Acts have changed the supervisory physician's countersignature requirements for patient records completed by a physician assistant.

Previously, supervising physicians have been required to countersign all patient records completed by

Severance Agreements May Go Too Far

By Beth Slagle

Earlier this year, a former case manager at a Lehigh Valley hospital sued her employer for age discrimination, claiming her supervisor kept a list of employees over the age of 40 whom she wanted to fire.

A Michigan hospital recently had to pay a former employee $200,000 to settle a reverse-discrimination lawsuit in which the white employee alleged that his African-American boss made discriminatory racial remarks toward him.

The Internet of Things and the Impact on Health

By RJ Kedziora and Megg McCourt

Since 2008, more things are connected to the Internet than people. Trains, houses, and even animals are transmitting data through sensors to the Internet. Commuters know in real-time when their train will arrive at the station. A person can turn off their kitchen sink via their Smartphone from their seat on the train. Farmers are using wireless sensors on cows to be alerted when one is sick or pregnant.

The Internet, once comprised of just information and

Enhancing the Patient Experience — Is EHR *Really* Necessary?

By Steve Baker

There's a lot of noise and disagreement about electronic health records (EHR) right now.

For some it may seem like there is no end in sight.

For others, this is not as big a deal as some are making it out to be.

In my experience, if you understand these four things, you'll see that a certified EHR can

Enhancing the Patient Experience —
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help you improve your business and enhance patient care.

1. More patient, less information technology

Certified EHRs are critical to not only enhancing the patient experience but also to making sure that a practice is in a position to be relevant in the future.

Certified EHRs are the platform — the underlying foundation — for enhancing your business and improving patient interaction and satisfaction.

Of course, an EHR won't solve world hunger, cure the common cold or eliminate the national debt.

What a certified EHR can do, however, is enable you to spend more time helping patients instead of entering data at the computer, streamline your workflow with less time at the office, and, with the realization of interoperability, can even give you the opportunity to become an easily accessible part of your patient's total health and wellness team.

2. Patients are consumers and they're using technology for everything

After speaking with hundreds of eye care professionals across America, I understand that providing great patient care is, not surprisingly, their top priority.

Doctors want to take care of their patients, plain and simple.

And something that many doctors realize is how their patients are consumers of healthcare and all of its services.

The patient landscape isn't changing; it has actually already changed.

Consumers are technology enabled, mobile and expect limitless choices at their fingertips.

According to Google/Ipsos, 96 percent of smartphone owners have researched a product or service on their phones.

Are your patients able to connect with your office and their medical information via a mobile device?

Benefitspro.com cites an IHS Technology report that projects how there will be a 20-fold growth in patients who are using telemedicine in the coming decade.

Additionally, 72 percent are willing to check in with their provider via video conferencing.

As a result, this change in technology and consumer preference will have a definite impact on your business and practice, if it hasn't already.

3. It's in the Cloud — flexible, streamlined, saves money

How does an EHR help with practice and patient challenges?

With a cloud-based system in place, you will be able to securely access patient data from any device at any time and from anywhere that you have an Internet connection.

You won't need additional computer equipment or information technology experts, and you won't have to worry about servers crashing, software backups or making required updates.

This can save you money in the short-term with equipment costs, and it can save you time and money in the long-term, because you won't need to constantly purchase new equipment or pay additional support staff to maintain the system.

Additionally, with a cloud-based EHR, you can be more flexible and engaged with your patient.

For instance, you can use a tablet, which will allow you to move away from the computer that is anchored to a desk.

Your patient will see your face while the two of you are talking instead of looking at your back while you enter information into the computer.

You can share information instantly during the exam or send everything over to the patient securely for review at a later time.

4. Patient engagement is key

A significant piece of the certified EHR system is the patient portal, which I see as the "superglue" between the patient and practice.

The patient portal can help make it easy for your patient to connect with you for appointments, access exam history, ask you questions and allow for you to respond directly and securely.

Percent of Physicians e-Prescribing through an Electronic Health Record 2008-2013
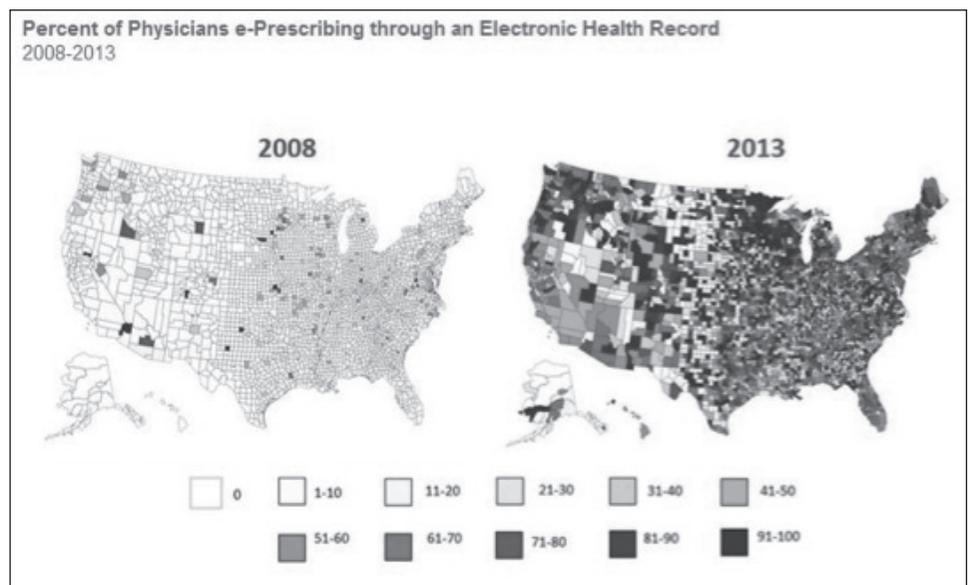
The patient could also view lab results or order prescription refills, and if the patient is doing this, it will free up your and your staff's time to take care of other necessary tasks.

Since these tasks are done online, the patient can be proactive and conduct business when it is convenient for him or her.

Having a certified EHR and integrated practice management solution can be critical to your success.

You entered the business to help patients, and an effective, certified EHR can help you to do more of that.

EHRs won't take care of everything for you, but it can help you to be more successful.

Using a certified EHR system now will help to prepare you for the future of interoperability, which leads to better patient service and satisfaction and a more efficient office.

Adopt a cloud-based, integrated practice management and EHR system so that you can spend more time with your patients, increase employee productivity and grow your business. ✚

Steve Baker, President, oversees the day-to-day operations of Eyefinity®, the eye care industry's leading provider of practice management and EHR solutions and one of five innovative companies comprising VSP Global®.

Steve is focused on business growth, strategic planning and product development.

Steve holds a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science from California State University, Northridge, with a concentration in systems design and mathematics.

Steve enjoys most anything outdoors and is an avid cycling fan.

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And, don't forget to have your lease documents professionally reviewed by a Lease Consultant before you sign them.

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