April Deadline for HIPAA Security

Many of you are aware that new HIPAA security regulations go into effect on April 21. Medical practice electronic security expert David Gregory of eHealthSecurity spoke at the HealthSystems' User Group meetings last fall. Gregory warned that many practices are leaving their electronic "doors" unlocked, opening themselves to liability in terms of theft of data, including patient records.

HIPAA has 42 specific action items you must address by April 21, from policies and procedures to performance analyses such as a security audit. Among the easiest areas to address are passwords and log-ins. For example, you should always create strong passwords. Gregory recommends a minimum of eight characters, using a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, symbols and numbers. Don't use initials, names, street numbers, dates, and other words or numbers easily linked to you and your family. You should never share accounts or passwords with others, and you should never create shared log-ins, such as Exam Room One.

For more information about the HIPAA security regulations, contact us. We'll be happy to share more detailed resources with you.

Centricity CPO-PM 04 Upgrades – Quick, Painless & Necessary

The Centricity CPO-PM 04 upgrade is now available – and the first service pack was just released in mid-December. If you haven't yet upgraded, it's time to migrate. Affordable, quick and painless, the upgrade takes minutes to accomplish and can be done remotely with no disruption to your office. According to GE Medical Systems Value Added Reseller Operations and Service Manager Tom Maxwell, who spoke at the HealthSystems User Group Meeting in Alabama in November, 200-plus practices around the country have already been updated successfully. "The upgrade features more than 350 enhancements and corrections," said Maxwell. "Most of them are behind-the-scenes changes that increase speed, enhance performance and deliver more system stability."

Among the more visible features are a variety of useful improvements.

SCHEDULING A convenient appointment check-in button speeds patient intake.

CHARGE ENTRY VIA GRID Save time by editing fields on the main charge entry screen of the visit instead of having to drill down.

PAYMENT ENTRY TRANSFERS You can now choose to transfer a payment entry.

SECONDARY EOB In sync with new HIPAA rules, the system will now let you print out secondary EOBs instead of making mass copies.

CLAIM ID SUMMARY Use this new report to quickly identify rejection or error messages for claims.

ALTERNATE PAYORS Easily attach alternate payors for DME to claim forms.

REPORT CRITERIA OPTIONS You now have three choices about how to print report criteria.

ENHANCED HELP The online help function is now richer and easier to use.

Internal Medical Specialists in Atlanta upgraded recently, and according to Office Manager Angela Legg, the process went very smoothly. "HealthSystems handled the upgrade remotely," she said. "They are very familiar with our practice and they knew exactly what needed to be done. It went just fine."

Minimal training is involved in the upgrade, but even that can be accomplished easily via HealthSystems' new WebEx training (see story page 4).

We encourage you to plan your migration soon. To schedule your upgrade, contact Karen Byrne at **770-936-9738 x 121** or **kbyrne@healthsystems.net**.

Upgrade Options

HealthSystems is offering three CPO-PM 04 upgrade and training options:

Option 1: Upgrade with Group WebEx Training
HealthSystems will perform your upgrade remotely and you can join your fellow Centricity users for a group training session online via WebEx.

Option 2: Upgrade with Individual WebEx Training
If you are unable to make one of our published group WebEx sessions or would prefer a little more individual attention, this option includes a WebEx training session scheduled at your convenience. Again, HealthSystems will perform the upgrade remotely.

Option 3: Upgrade and Onsite Training
For larger practices or for those that would prefer that we come onsite for both the upgrade installation and training, choosing this option means HealthSystems personnel will come to your location for the day. Because installation and training times may vary, any time left over can be spent on other questions or outstanding issues.

To schedule your upgrade or get more information, contact Karen Byrne at **770-936-9738 x 121** or **kbyrne@healthsystems.net**.

How to Choose An EMR System

BY WAYNE MOORE

Wayne Moore, Business Development Manager

Is your practice considering a new EMR system? If so, you'll need to know what to look for to ensure that the system you choose is right for you.

I've been working with EMR systems since the mid-1990s, and I am familiar with many of the well-known developers, including Logician, MD Systems, Electronic Healthcare Systems and Misys. During my years of experience with these companies and their products, I've developed a list of "must-haves" regarding EMR selection.

Here are my top five considerations for choosing an EMR system:

1. Financial Stability of the Developer

More than 700 software companies sell EMR systems, and many will not survive in the long run. Pick a steady developer with a long-term commitment to the product.

2. Product Maturity

Consider how long the product has been in the marketplace and the impact users have had on features and functionality. Look for a large installed base and established user groups that have helped mold the product through customer feedback to the developer.

3. System Integration, Today & Tomorrow

How well does the EMR software integrate with your current billing system? You'll avoid a lot of pain if your EMR can handle patient demographic data including insurance information; scheduling and referring doctor information; and can pass charge information to the billing system. Consider obtaining a billing system and EMR from the same vendor to avoid version-level discrepancies.

4. Local Support Groups

Look for an EMR that's supported by a local entity that can not only deliver the product but support and train your office personnel. Do they have user group meetings? Custom templates? Your practice will need individual attention and personal service.

5. Digital Data Import

Your EMR system should be able to import clinical data from the digital equipment in your office – vital signs, EKGs, bone densities, and so on. This limits your practice's risk and liability by ensuring that the data is accurately recorded and lowers the labor cost of manually entering such information.

Do you have questions about an EMR system? Contact Wayne Moore at 770-936-9738 x 225 or wmoore@healthsystems.net.

Check Out Our New Support Services

HealthSystems has recently launched two additional support services, giving clients even more ways to efficiently interact with the HealthSystems support team. As demonstrated at our recent user group meetings, our secure website – www.healthsystems.net/support.htm – lets you:

Ask A Question – Clicking on this button gives you several options to ask questions, look up FAQs, get information about custom reports, post helpful tips, look up the status of your question and review resolved questions. Perfect for clients who like using the computer more than the phone, this DeskPro-based option is great for non-urgent issues.

WebEx Training or Support – This option lets you access our one-on-one support center and online training sessions. Via the support center, you can get on-screen support from the HealthSystems team – we can see your screen, control your mouse and help you resolve problems quickly. Via the training center, you can attend group WebEx training sessions online.

Please check out the new support page and let us know what you think by sending a message to bestpractices@healthsystems.net. Also let us know if you would be interested in scheduled WebEx "lunch and learn" training sessions on specific topics.

www.healthsystems.net/support.htm

Ask the Experts...

The HealthSystems support staff knows many tricks and tips to help you use your Centricity Practice Management system more efficiently. Here are answers to questions frequently asked of support team members Bob Lile and Venessia Gresham.

Bob Lile
joined HealthSystems last spring and spends most of his time training clients on the Centricity PM software product. Earlier in his career, Bob was a medical software trainer for VitalWorks. Before that, he spent 20 years as a public school teacher.

Administrative Reports
BY BOB LILE

Q: Which reports should be in hard copy for safe-keeping?

A: The Doctor Identification, Company Identification and Facility Identification reports should all be printed and filed for safe-keeping.

To access and print these reports, click the Reports icon, select the Administrative folder and then choose each individual report name to set criteria. Once printed, these three reports are a useful reference for identifying all doctor, company and facility information currently in your system. Since information such as PIN numbers, group numbers and tax identification information is included in these reports, these references can be frequently used for billing or insurance filing purposes.

Tip: Always check the "Include Criteria Page" box to show how the report was set up.

Security Report
Another good report to print and file is the Security report. Click the Reports/Administrative folder and then select Security. This report enables management to quickly evaluate which users have accessibility to components within Centricity.

Note: There are no required sort criteria for this report. By default, the Security report is sorted alphabetically by each component.

Venessia Gresham
is HealthSystems' newest technical support team member. Venessia has been in the healthcare industry for more than 14 years. She worked in quality assurance and technical support for ProxyMed and NextGen, and began her career in a clinical setting.

Revised Schedule Template
BY VENESSIA GRESHAM

Q: How can I extend the doctors/ resources template to future dates?

A: First, click the Administration button and then Edit. Select either Doctors or Resources, depending on the schedule template you wish to extend.

When the Select Doctor or Select Resource window opens, search for the appropriate doctor or resource. The Modify window will open. Click the Schedule Template tab.

The Modify screen will open. (**Tip:** Scroll down to determine the date that this schedule ends.) Click the Schedule Template button at the bottom of the page.

Select the schedule you want to extend and click Modify. Click the Schedule Template Assignment tab. Select the days (checkmark) to which you are assigning this resource – Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thur, Fri or Sat. (**Note:** The checkmark defaults to the current day.)

Enter the effective and expiration dates for this schedule template. Example: If the schedule ends on the 25th your effective date will start on the 26th.

Click Add. The selected day(s) display in the list box. Click Save. A warning message will display: "It may take several minutes to apply your schedule changes to all schedule dates. Do you wish to continue?" You may want to perform this function early in the morning or late in the day, so you won't disrupt the system too much.

When the hourglass disappears, you're done!

Dave Henriksen (left), General Manager, Centricity Physician Office, spoke at our User Group Meeting in Atlanta. He is pictured here with HealthSystems founder Maurice Rosenbaum.

User Group Meetings A Great Success

More than 70 HealthSystems clients met last fall at our 2004 User Group meetings in Atlanta and Montgomery. Attendees shared ideas, reviewed Centricity CPO-PM 04 features, listened to informative guest speakers and generally learned a lot more about how to get the most from their systems.

"Great value," one attendee said. "The content and organization were very impressive," said another, "the materials and security presentation were really helpful." Look for information to come about our Fall 2005 User Group Meetings – dates will be decided soon.

Mark Your Calendar

Please make note of these upcoming events.

February 2 – Reports Training Class, Atlanta (The Ashford Club)

February 23 – Lunch and Learn for HealthSystems Clients, Atlanta (The Ashford Club)

March 2-4 – Alabama Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) Meeting, Birmingham (The Wynfrey Hotel)

March 10 – Centricity EMR Sales Seminar, Atlanta (The Ashford Club)

April 27 – Reports Training Class, Mobile (The International Trade Club)

May 25 – Lunch and Learn for HealthSystems Clients, Atlanta (The Ashford Club)

If you know of any practices interested in changing their practice management system or implementing an EMR system, please have them call Karen Byrne at 770-936-9738.

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