Electronic Health Record System Gets Government’s Stamp of Approval

By Anna Azvolinsky [3]

iKnowMed Electronic Health Record (EHR) System has received the federal government’s approval via a Complete EHR Certification. The 6.3 version of the software is owned by McKesson Specialty Care Solutions and US Oncology, and was developed by US Oncology.

What does a “Complete Meaningful Use Certification by the government actually mean? The label allows iKnowMed to enable providers to qualify for funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The software was tested and subsequently authorized by the Electronic Health Records Office of the National Coordinator Authorized Testing and Certification Body (ONC-ATCB) program. The software was deemed compliant for 2011 and 2012 as per the criteria of the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

“By utilizing iKnowMed’s capabilities, healthcare providers can make significant care improvements, achieve Meaningful Use and qualify for incentive funds under ARRA. This is an exciting accomplishment for us, and we are proud to offer iKnowMed to oncology practices across the country.” Says Roy Beveridge, MD and chief medical officer at US Oncology.

“iKnowMed has been rated as a top-ranked EHR, but this government certification further validates that iKnowMed can help providers improve cancer care in their communities.”

As the largest community-based cancer treatment and research network, US Oncology created iKnowMed to provide information technology (IT) solutions to promote best practices and high-quality patient care. The system’s goal is to allow practices to have the best patient care, in part by increasing productivity and lowering operation costs for clinicians.

iKnowMed is a web-based application that allows the collection of detailed patient information entered by clinicians into a centralized database, and allows for constant development by the oncologists who use it. iKnowMed is also linked to the US Oncology Healthcare Informatics group, composed of clinical data analysts, statisticians, pharmacists, and oncology nurses, providing even more information for clinicians. The group has more than 900,000 patient charts on 15 different tumor types, or approximately 65% of patients treated, according to US Oncology. Utilization of this platform allows clinicians with access to mine data and analyze it for research and outcomes studies for publication in peer-review journals.

iKnowMed is currently integrated at more than 200 sites in the U.S., allowing physicians unlimited access 24 hours a day to patient records, diagnosis, and staging content as well as a cancer regimen library; it also allows the identification of patients for appropriate clinical trials that are available. The adoption rate for U.S. physicians of EHR usage prior to 2009 was a surprisingly low with only 17% using a specified system. Healthcare costs will continue to escalate but a sound and integrated healthcare IT system and databases, at least in theory, should provide better care by allowing clinicians to better understand outcomes and to facilitate reasonable reimbursement rate determination. Having detailed clinical documentation should streamline reimbursement by having evidence-based medicine communicated to payers at the forefront and help physicians as reimbursement schemes are becoming increasingly complex. The system will inherently drive accountability for performance of care and create a way to evaluate the value of care, something that both private payers and Medicare finds increasingly important.

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