



IT Outsourcing: HealthIT Offers Solutions For Healthcare Providers Facing Technology Challenges

For some years now healthcare providers have been working toward implementing an electronic medical records (EMR) environment. This technology will reduce medical errors, make it easier to collect patient data, and improve efficiency and the bottom line for hospitals, clinics and physician practices. Providers must also be HIPAA-compliant. HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) in part, requires the establishment of national standards for electronic health care transactions and national identifiers for providers, health insurers, and employers. HIPAA was also put in place to protect patient data and privacy — this makes security a priority for the largest to the smallest health care provider. It also means having network systems and staff equipped to handle records security issues.

But with new technology there is always a learning curve and many providers just aren't in a position to hire and train inside IT staff. They would rather concentrate on their core business: providing healthcare services. That is why many organizations have chosen to outsource their information technology (IT) services. According to a survey conducted by the Outsourcing Institute, the top five reasons why companies outsource certain business functions include:

1. Reducing and controlling operating costs;
2. Improving company focus;
3. Gaining access to world-class capabilities;
4. Freeing up internal resources for other purposes;
5. Resources are not available internally.

Healthcare organizations choose HealthIT for many of these same reasons and because we specialize in technology services specifically for the healthcare industry. Conceived ten years ago by a physician, Dr. Jivesh Sharma, HealthIT brings together health industry information technologists and other clinically trained specialists to address the special needs of healthcare providers. HealthIT has grown to include local and national clients offering solutions in the EMR selection process, practice management, and price analysis as well as network support services such as:

- Network design and implementation
- Server configuration
- Email configuration
- Virus protection
- Offsite backup
- Computer updates
- Password and connectivity issues
- Disaster Recovery
- Security Solution



Dr. Sharma says, "We understand the issues our clients are facing like mandated HIPAA regulations and their concerns over security. It is a top priority for most healthcare organizations — whether a hospital or a physician practice group."

HealthIT's knowledgeable staff has the expertise needed in system security solutions. All HealthIT network engineers are certified by the following: Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MSCSE), Cisco Certified Network Associates (CCNA), A+, Network+ — and they have training certifications such as SUN Unix systems and Linux. Network Engineer, Miguel Camacho, says, "The question I hear the most is 'Will I get hacked?' I tell clients that we follow the strict security policies enforced by HIPAA and we have highly secure and encrypted connections."

Another common concern is about losing data. HealthIT has servers that have a capacity of 2 terabytes with the capability of expanding. Data is backed up locally and off-site every day.

IT outsourcing may be perceived to be costly and some healthcare providers believe they are saving money by keeping this aspect of their business in-house. In many instances, this isn't the case. Although some outsourcing companies may charge upwards of \$160 an hour for technical services, HealthIT has a number of plans that are tailored to the client's needs including onsite and remote services. CTO, April Young explains, "We take a tiered pricing approach because not all our clients need the same level of care. Some want a yearly contract that covers everything from preventive service calls, phone support and training while others only need us on an hourly basis to handle lower-level issues. Our rates are very reasonable."

Outsourcing information technology has been the solution for many healthcare organizations but it is a decision that needs to be made from an educated perspective. With this in mind, we have scheduled two sessions (IT Outsourcing and Common IT Problems) in our "Breakfast Meeting Series" November 28th and December 19th addressing the benefits and challenges of technology. Seating is limited so call 972.762.2812 soon or register online at www.HealthIT.com.