Spanning the Bridge to Patient Safety During an EHR System Downtime

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EHR Access

- Read Only access displays a recent snapshot of the EHR to view clinical information. No associated ability to document in the system.
- Downtime Web access available if the network is down. ED registrars and bed management have limited ability to register new patients.
- Downtime PC/Printer is used when there is a power outage to access and print reports.

Communication

- Scheduled downtime –
  - Email notification to all employees a few days before and again one day before scheduled event.
  - Sign-on message on day of downtime.
  - Automated call alerting users throughout the organization of a scheduled downtime to complete documentation and print reports needed. Follow-up call processed once system again available.
- Unscheduled/Emergency downtime –
  - Help desk begins to receive calls regarding a system issue that may be impacting multiple users. If issue unresolved, downtime support team notified.
  - Communication goes out to entire network using the automated call system based on the day/time of day to get communication to appropriate users.

Equipment

- Walkthroughs to determine location for equipment placement
- Hardwire PC dedicated to downtime report access
- Hardwire Printer dedicated to downtime printing
- Red outlets for backup generator power source
- Backup “sister” PC/printer

Education

- Initial training prior to Go-Live of new EHR
- Annual education to reinforce process with all staff
- Red Binders with information
  - downtime generic access
  - printing report process
  - sister PC stations
  - backload documentation
  - downtime procedure for specified area
- Users can view reports online via downtime web access or print reports needed for an extended downtime using the designated downtime PC/Printer
  - Census report contains basic patient information.
  - MAR (Medication Administration Record) includes specific medications/II information so that medications can be administered during downtime.
  - Clinical Summary contains all active orders, code status, consults, recent labs, vital signs and I&O.
  - Nutrition report displays patient diet, tube feedings and supplements.

Future Plans

- Monthly testing of report printing
- Downtime drills
- Future documentation access to include notes
- Read Only access displays a recent snapshot of the EHR to view clinical information. No associated ability to document in the system.
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Maintaining patient safety during an electronic health record (EHR) system downtime is vital to keep operations running efficiently. The implementation of a robust new EHR prompted a large health network to evaluate and revise their organizational downtime procedures.