

Digging Into the Details of “Certified EMR” & Tips For Buying an EMR

Steps to digging under the meaning of EMR certification:



Image via Wikipedia

1. Click to see the most recent alphabetical list (by product name not company) of **all products** certified **here**.
2. Find the **company or companies** you are using or are considering using.
3. Check that the exact name of the **product** is what you have or might purchase.
4. Check to find out if a **module or part of the product is certified or if the complete** product is certified.
5. Check to make sure the **version** of the product is the version you have or will have.

If you have questions about each company's exact criteria met, you are in luck! On the **ONC site here**, you can click on each company's detail ("View Criteria") on the far right column labeled "Certification Status" to see what they have and don't have. Compare this to how you are anticipating using your EMR to meet meaningful use. The more check marks a company has, the better-equipped they are (and more flexible) to meet your practice needs and to qualify for the stimulus money.

The ONC site with the Certified Health IT Product List (CHPL) is Version 1.0. Version 2.0 is now being developed and will provide the Clinical Quality Measures each product was tested on, and the capability to query and sort the data for viewing. The next version will also provide the **reporting number** that will be accepted by CMS for purposes of attestation under the EHR ("meaningful use") incentives programs.

You can tell ONC what you think would be helpful in the new version by emailing your ideas to **ONC.certification@hhs.gov**, with "CHPL" in the subject line.

If you'd like a list of just outpatient/medical practice EMR products or just inpatient / hospital products, I've split the big list into two smaller printable lists here:

Medical Practice / Outpatient

Hospital / Outpatient

Tips On Buying An EMR



Remember that meeting meaningful use does not tell the whole story – if you are shopping for an EMR be prepared to go beyond a product's certification status to consider:

- **Flexibility** – does it make the practice conform to it or can it conform to the practice? How?

- **Templates and best practices** – are you starting from scratch in developing protocols, templates and cheat sheets for your practice, or does it have a storehouse of examples to choose from or tweak?
- **Built for the physician, or the billing office, or the nurses**, but doesn't really meet the needs of all three? Make sure the functionality is not too skewed to one user group, but if it is, it should be somewhat skewed to the provider.
- **Interface and integration with your practice management system.** Does the information flow both ways? Do you ever have to re-enter information because one side doesn't speak to the other?
- **Interface with other inside and outside systems:** Labs, imaging, hospital systems, ambulatory surgical center systems?
- **Built-in Resources:** annual upgrade of HCPCS and ICD codes, drug compendium (Epocrates), comparative effectiveness prompting?
- **Mobile applications** – EMR on your providers' phones?
- **Data entry systems** – laptops, notebooks, tablets, iPads, smartphones, voice recognition?
- **Hosting** – in your office? at the hospital? at the vendor's data center? in the cloud of your choice?
- **What's the plan for ICD-10?** Will they provide practice support and education for the change or will they just change the number of characters in the diagnosis code field?
- **Price**, including annual maintenance and additional costs for training, implementation, on-site support during go-live, and additional licenses for providers or staff.