Epic: The Future of EHR at Scripps

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Scripps Health is embarking on an ambitious initiative that will impact every department, employee, physician and patient, and it will change the way we provide health care.

Scripps is implementing the Epic electronic health record (EHR) and revenue cycle system to support improved patient care, clinical outcomes and efficiency. This new single, integrated system will replace our ambulatory and inpatient EHR and revenue cycle management systems. All departments across Scripps will be involved – from clinicians and executives to finance and the information services (IS) department.

"There are two common threads running through every project undertaken by the IS department at Scripps – patients and partnerships," says **Patric Thomas**, chief information officer and corporate VP of information services. "Everything we do – great or small – is in service to patient care, directly or indirectly.

"Our work is also always in support of Scripps' strategic objectives," he adds. "We work in partnership with operating units to help achieve those objectives. The new EHR is a good example of both – better delivery of care for patients and partnering with clinical staff, physicians and the business office on all decisions concerning the EHR and revenue cycle applications. This undertaking will act as a catalyst for change, driving standardized processes and improved workflows."

What is Epic?

Epic was chosen for our new EHR and revenue cycle system following thorough product reviews and comparisons, as well as feedback from Scripps' nurses, physicians and other clinical and business teams. More than 25 focus groups developed questions, criteria and clinical scenarios that were used to demonstrate the product earlier this year. At those demonstrations, almost 900 physicians, nurses and employees from clinical and non-clinical areas tried out the system and agreed it was the best EHR for our needs.

Epic is the leading information technology partner to major hospitals and health systems across the U.S. Its EHR system will help us create an integrated platform across our inpatient, ambulatory and post-acute care settings and share data securely with external groups that use Epic and other EHRs. Our caregivers will be able to exchange data across our system, our region and beyond.

Why switch?

No doubt, transitioning to a new EHR system throughout Scripps is going to be expensive. With development, licensing, staffing, training and implementation, the cost to Scripps will reach $500 million. So why is Scripps investing so much money to switch EHRs?

The hospitals have been using Centricity (a GE product) for several years, and during that time we've experienced a great number of problems that have kept that system from fully meeting our needs. Consistent feedback on the Great Place to Work survey expressed frustration with Centricity and the lack of a complete EHR in the acute environment (i.e., ED, ICU and anesthesia). On top of that, GE is no longer marketing or upgrading the system and has announced sunsetting the system all together, so it will not grow with our expanding needs.

Our ambulatory sites for Scripps Clinic and Scripps Coastal medical groups have been using the Allscripts EHR system. Communication between Allscripts and the hospitals' Centricity systems has been problematic, impeding the sharing of patient information.

"Having one, integrated system will remove barriers and facilitate the communication of patient information between the hospitals and the

ambulatory sites, giving us a single patient record for each person instead of multiple records," says Thomas. The switch to Epic will also help us:

- Improve quality, service and efficiency
- Incorporate process improvement innovations into the EHR across the system
- Build systems of care into the EHR that span the best practice, evidence-based care pathways
- Leverage the integration capability of EHR by designing effective hand-offs and care transitions across the care continuum
- Integrate robust patient portal, mobile and data-repository capabilities — more than 16 new capabilities that are not currently available at Scripps
- Enhance the reimbursement and revenue systems that support patient care

Where are we now with the transition to Epic?

Epic-certified IS staff are now dedicated exclusively to the EHR transition. They will continue working with the departments that will be using the new system to develop an EHR system specific to our needs.

Beginning in fall and continuing into 2016, clinical and business staff will assist in three primary areas:

- Direction setting — Subject matter experts will map current-state workflows and engage in deep-dive demonstrations to establish key performance indicators and set the scope within each application (e.g., self-scheduling, online bill pay, etc.).
- Workflow adoption — Business and clinical subject matter experts, management and physicians will help identify application workflow and map future-state workflows, both department-specific and multidisciplinary.
- Specialty validation and clinical content adoption — Subject matter experts, management and physicians will finalize order sets, care plans, decision support and documentation templates.

End game

We plan to implement the new EHR and revenue cycle solution across ambulatory, acute and post-acute environments beginning in mid-2017 and complete implementation across the system in 2018.

"This seamless data and communications platform spans our entire care continuum and will improve the already excellent care we provide our patients," says **Chris Van Gorder**, president and CEO. "It also positions Scripps for long-term growth for years to come."