


6 Software Considerations

FOR NEW & STARTUP SPECIALTY PRACTICES

For a specialty practice that is just starting out, choosing the right EHR and PM software can make or break both your immediate and long-term success.

Choosing the wrong software can have negative effects on almost every aspect of a practice, from productivity to profitability and even employee retention.

While everyone agrees it's important to choose the right software for a startup practice, there are few resources that really explain exactly what considerations should be factored in when making this choice. This document will provide startup practices with a general guide on what should be considered and includes a software considerations list.



EHR dissatisfaction directly contributes to a clinician's likelihood of leaving an organization.¹

¹ "Clinician Turnover and the EHR Experience": <https://klasresearch.com/archcollaborative/report/clinician-turnover-and-the-ehr-experience/418>

1 User-Friendliness

User-friendliness should be top of mind when you participate in a demo of any new EHR/PM system. Is it designed to fit your workflow? Or, better yet, **can it be customized to your practice workflows? Is it intuitive, with a user interface that is simple to learn and understand?**

The primary reason user-friendliness matters in your software has to do with the fact that your practice will likely be using it in the long term. Therefore, it's not like you'll just train your staff on it once and be done with it. Over time, people will come and go. **You'll need a software that can be picked up easily by new staff members without the need for extensive training.**

Another reason to consider user-friendliness has to do with clinical and administrative efficiency. **Software that is difficult to use will absolutely bog down productivity**, causing physicians to stay after hours to complete charting and forcing front- and back-office staff to spend more time than they should on daily and monthly closures.



2 Interoperability

Is it an EHR or an EMR? Seems like a trivial question, but it matters, and you should ask when inquiring about your first system. **You need an EHR that offers a high level of interoperability that simply does not exist in a software that solely offers EMR capabilities** (meaning it only stores information within the practice and is not designed for information sharing). **Your EHR should also be able to seamlessly pull data from the diagnostic devices you use in your practice into the correct patient record.**

Any new practice needs the ability to easily exchange information with other authorized entities as well as communicate with HIEs, ACOs, and other networks. Without the power of interoperability in your software, your practice will be forced to share data in slow and/or manual processes that eat up time and energy that is better spent doing other things.



3

Robust Reporting, Analytics, & Business Intelligence

To make sure you're tracking every crucial area for success, your startup practice will need the power of robust reporting, analytics, and business intelligence. These tools empower your practice's data, turning information into action, which is important for a number of reasons.

First and foremost, robust reporting is crucial to any practice. Therefore, **any EHR worth purchasing should have a simplified reporting process and offer a full arsenal of reporting templates that cover all facets of your practice's operations**—scheduling, no-shows, cancellations, procedures, demographics, financials and more. Also consider whether your EHR integrates with the American Academy of Ophthalmology IRIS® Registry (Intelligent Research in Sight) for MIPS reporting. **Being able to compare clinically relevant data, analyze benchmarks, and report data to CMS helps your practice improve efficiency and enhance quality; and not every EHR integrates with IRIS.**

While robust reporting is a necessity, **your software should also offer analytics and business intelligence tools that allow you to make informed decisions for your practice.** With these data-driven tools, you can make better choices when it comes to marketing, sales, inventory, purchasing, etc. and ensure that you are getting the most bang for your buck.



4

Integrated Patient Portal



To make sure your practice's front office operations are streamlined and efficient from day one, a patient portal can be essential. Without one, you will soon find that front office staff is spending an unnecessary amount of time making calls, intaking patients, manually inputting information, and scheduling appointments. A patient portal makes it possible for your patients to do these things online, without any need for front desk staff to be involved. This frees up time for more important tasks and makes your new practice more efficient from day one.

Your patient portal should also be integrated with your EHR/PM system and be web-based. This allows your practice to share lab results with patients directly via the portal. Patients can review their medical information, schedule appointments, pay balances, and request prescription refills from their home computer or smartphone, without having to call the practice.

5 Integrated Payments

Demand for online payment options is rapidly increasing. If you can't offer multiple convenient payment options, you risk losing patients to practices that do. **Your new practice will need to be able to accept payment in multiple forms, both on-site and online, in order to remain competitive and ensure an uninterrupted revenue stream.**



68% PATIENTS WANT THEIR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS TO OFFER DIGITAL PAYMENTS OPTIONS²

81% CONSUMERS WANT HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS TO PROVIDE *MORE* ONLINE PAYMENT OPTIONS³

71% CONSUMERS WANT TO BE ABLE TO RECEIVE ELECTRONIC STATEMENTS FROM PROVIDERS³

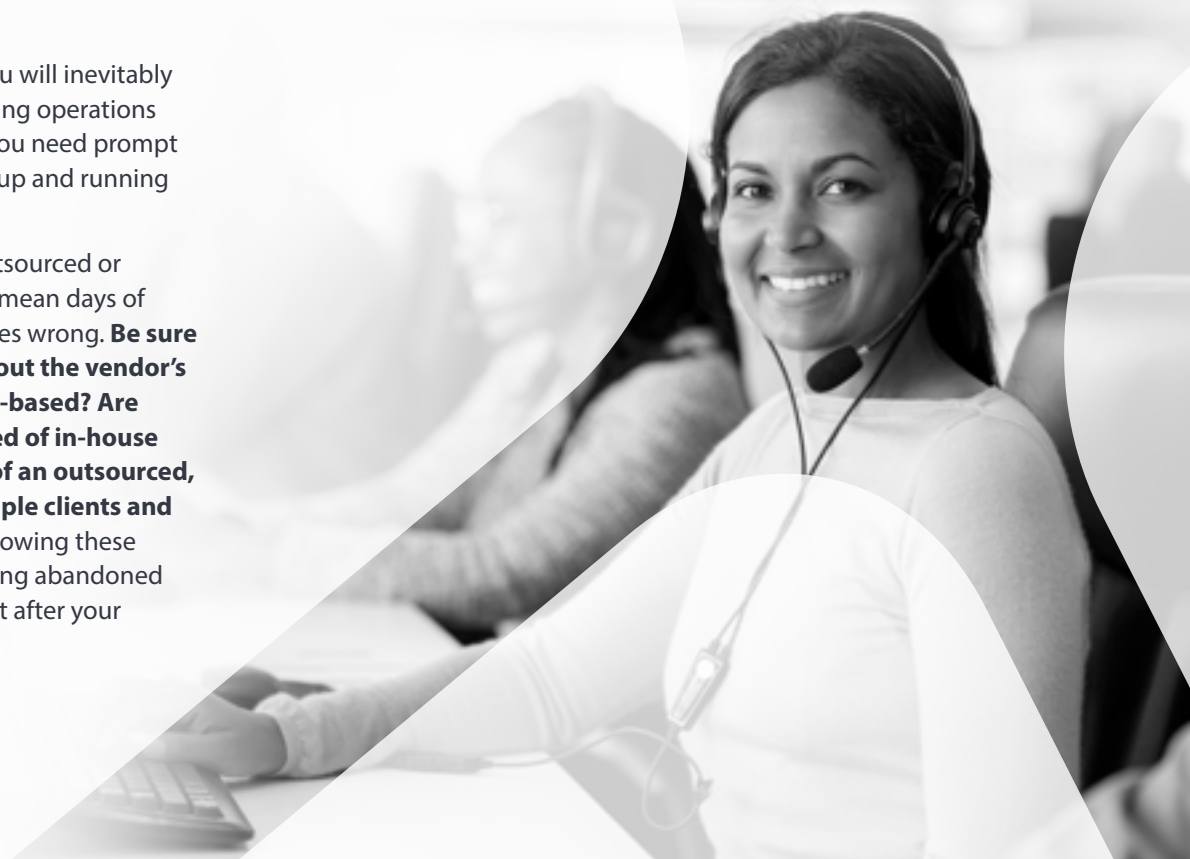
² "Health consumers want digital payments from providers": <https://patientengagementhit.com/news/health-consumers-want-digital-patient-payments-from-providers>

³ "Consumers want more online payment options for healthcare": <https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/2019/05/06/consumers-want-more-online-payment-options-for-healthcare/>

6 Continuous & Responsive Technical Support


Even with the best software, you will inevitably run into a problem that may bring operations to a halt. When that happens, you need prompt assistance so you can get back up and running quickly.

If you choose a vendor with outsourced or unresponsive support, it could mean days of downtime when something goes wrong. **Be sure to ask plenty of questions about the vendor's support services. Are they US-based? Are their support teams comprised of in-house experts or are they just part of an outsourced, third-party service with multiple clients and no real product expertise?** Knowing these answers can help you avoid being abandoned and without the proper support after your practice goes live.



Creating a Software Considerations List for Your Practice

With all of the above considerations in mind, it's now time to **build a software requirement list that is unique to your startup practice's anticipated needs**. See the below table for a checklist you can use to compare various vendors as you demo their products:

VENDOR	USER-FRIENDLY	INTEROPERABILITY	REPORTING, ANALYTICS, & BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE	INTEGRATED PATIENT PORTAL	INTEGRATED PAYMENTS	CONTINUOUS & RESPONSIVE TECH SUPPORT
 Nextech	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
VENDOR 1						
VENDOR 2						
VENDOR 3						
VENDOR 4						

The Nextech Difference

Starting a new practice can be an intimidating endeavor. However, with the right software, you can set your new practice up for immediate and ongoing success.

Contact us today to find out how Nextech can help your startup practice grow and thrive, from the day you first open your doors and well into the future.

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