



**AMBULATORY**  
**ACUTE CARE** **EHR**  
- A BUYER'S GUIDE

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## INTRODUCTION


Despite the fact that every electronic health record (EHR) aims to capture data from multiple sources intended to be used at the point of care to support clinical decision making, several differences exist between EHRs for ambulatory services and those for acute care hospitals. Understanding different EHRs for your practice holds the key to the success of your technology investment and your healthcare business. This guide will provide you with a closer look at Ambulatory EHR vs. Acute Care EHR to help you better understand which would best fit your practice.

## ACUTE CARE EHR

### WHAT IS AN ACUTE CARE EHR?



Acute care hospitals are hospitals providing inpatient medical care for the treatment of minor injuries, short-term illnesses, or general health conditions. Acute care is usually provided in an emergency department when a patient has a severe but short-term illness or condition.



The EHRs used in these organizations do not comprise a single system but a collection of many separate ones in various departments. The majority of these applications are unique, non-standard, and require integration into the main hospital's Electronic Health Record environment locally.

The image below represents what an acute care EHR looks like





## WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FACED BY ACUTE CARE EHRs?

- ➔ Integrating hospital EHR systems with different departmental systems presents an internal challenge. Different departmental systems need to be able to communicate with each other, requiring customized integrations.
- ➔ Clinical documentation is highly detailed and complex as the inputs from multiple departments, physicians, clinicians, consultants, and providers of care are all merged into a single episode-of-care record.
- ➔ In acute care settings, it is imperative to keep the medical records of both in-patients and out-patients up-to-date with a plan of care.
- ➔ The EHR should provide a complete, timely, accurate, and ongoing record of the patient's condition to ensure continuity of care.



## WHAT DO ACUTE CARE HEALTH RECORDS COMPRISE?

Admission and Consent Records.

01

Physical findings and information about patients' past illnesses and injuries, and the specific condition due to which the patient has visited the hospital.

02

Prior to a patient's arrival at the hospital, orders from physicians for admission and treatment.

03

Nurses' Notes and Medication Records.

04

Ancillary Services and Consultation Records, including laboratory reports, radiologic findings, pathology findings, consultations and operative reports, special consultations and specialty care such as psychiatric interventions, nuclear medicine or observations.

05

It houses the records of all care and results of diagnostic procedures. A discharge summary is also prepared, mentioning the condition, treatment, progress, and prognosis.

06

Records of the treatments planned and initiated, as well as the patient's response to each therapy.

07

## **WHAT DO ACUTE CARE FACILITIES MOSTLY SEEK IN EHRs?**

When acute care hospitals seek a suitable EHR, they're usually concerned with managing inpatient data – data that could come from labs, radiology, and other departments within the facility. Despite overcoming many IT hurdles, they may have to deal with the challenge of getting every system to communicate, which is a critical driver for a sophisticated EHR system.

## **BENEFITS OF ACUTE CARE EHR**



By maintaining a single, continuous record for every patient, a holistic view of their health can be seen for better diagnosis and treatment throughout their lives.



Medical professionals can more easily coordinate and track patient care across practices and facilities.



Critical patient information can be shared across specialties, disciplines, pharmacies, hospitals and emergency response teams, enabling better and timely decision making.



EHRs cut down on paperwork and streamline workflows.



As a result of continuous data collection, healthcare providers are able to address health problems in a preventative manner.



Reduced need for a physical chart, transcriptions storage, coding and claims management.



Having digital records enables better tracking and standardization of patient interactions, which reduces the possibility of errors.

## **ENSURING THE CONSISTENT FLOW OF INFORMATION THROUGHOUT THE FACILITY**

Just a few years ago, hospitals had to buy and install software designed for each specific department, e.g., the radiology department, the in-house lab department, billing systems, etc., that perform different functions for the hospital. It was necessary for every department to print out the results separately for all the patients they collected. They also had to enter data manually, increasing the likelihood of inaccurate or flawed data.

Fortunately, with time EHRs have become more systematic and sophisticated, leading to an increase in integration between hospitals' different departments and EHRs. They all work in tandem now rather than them all operating separately. Acute care EHR integrates different systems and exchanges patient information between hospital departments. This ensures that patient information is consistent throughout the entire facility.

## AMBULATORY EHR

### WHAT IS AN AMBULATORY EHR?



A longitudinal record is maintained instead of an episode-of-care in an ambulatory EHR.

Ambulatory EHRs offer help to smaller practices and outpatient care facilities. Professionals have access to patients' full medical histories, which are stored in electronic databases.

Simply put, ambulatory EHR solutions are simpler than acute care EHRs, because rather than dealing with a complex web of hospital departments, they deal with a single practice and its patients.

With the help of Ambulatory EHR systems, physicians can track a patient's medical records and long-term care.

By utilizing ambulatory EHR systems, doctors are able to collect specific, detailed information about each patient, providing them with a complete health record of that patient. Documented histories include diagnoses, visits, treatments, injuries, prescriptions, and much more.

With the help of Comprehensive databases, physicians can get comprehensive pictures for streamlining future diagnoses.



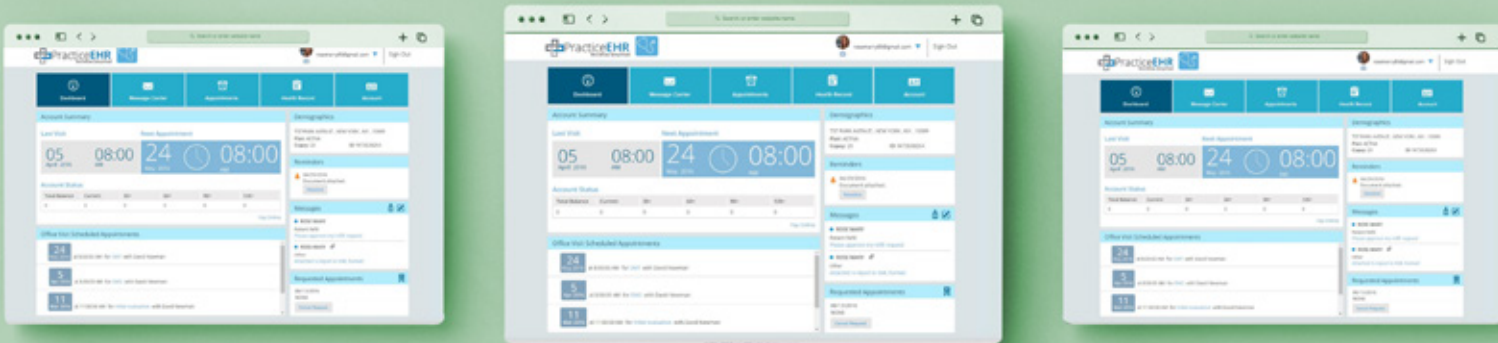
As an example, this capability makes it easy for the experts to identify patterns which could reveal several important things ranging from a seasonal allergy to a serious problem that has become more complex over time. Several health care businesses provide practices with patient portals based on this information.



## THE INTEGRATION OF AMBULATORY EHR'S WITH PATIENT PORTALS

- The integration of an ambulatory EHR solution with a patient portal allows patients to access their current medical records. In recent years, it has become a "must-have" EHR feature.
- Using patient portals, patients can view their history, schedule appointments and perform several other tasks.

This is what a patient portal looks like:



## THE GROWING USE OF AMBULATORY EHR'S

With outpatient treatment being the treatment of choice for the majority of patients because of less stress and more freedom, ambulatory EHR use has gone up dramatically over the past few years. And this boost is expected to continue in the next 5-10 years. As per a recent report, the ambulatory EHR market share valuation is projected to touch the mark of \$6.8 billion by 2025. Due to increased government push in promoting EHR systems, the ambulatory EHR market is expected to grow exponentially.

### ATTRACTIVE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AMBULATORY EHR MARKET

Market growth in North America can be attributed to collaborations between stakeholders, the need to curtail healthcare costs, and payment deductions driving the adoption of EHR solutions in the region.

**NORTH AMERICA**

**5.2** USD Billion  
2020-e

**6.8** USD Billion  
2025-p

**CAGR  
5.7%**

The global ambulatory EHR market is expected to be worth USD 6.8 billion by 2025, growing at a CAGR of 5.7% during the forecast period.



Factors such as government support for the adoption of EHR solutions and the need to curtail healthcare costs are driving the growth of the ambulatory EHR market.



Product launches and collaborations would offer lucrative opportunities for market players in the next 5 years.



The global ambulatory EHR market is expected to be worth USD 6.8 billion by 2025, growing at CAGR of 5.7% during the forecast period.



Market growth in the APAC can be attributed to the investments and reforms to modernize the healthcare infrastructure in the region and the increasing adoption of digital healthcare solutions.

e-estimated, p-projected

## WHAT DO AMBULATORY HEALTH RECORDS COMPRISE?

An ambulatory medical record (AMR) is an electronic record of a patient's outpatient medical records. This may include records of all surgeries and treatments that do not require admission to a hospital.

## IS AMR THE SAME AS EMR?



AMR and electronic medical record (EMR) bear many similarities but they are quite different. As opposed to EMRs, which keep track of inpatient care (surgeries and care provided overnight or for a long period of time in a hospital), AMRs do not keep track of inpatient care (surgeries and

care provided overnight or in a hospital). They only apply to care received outside of a hospital, such as in urgent care clinics, physicians' offices, and at home.

AMRs are stored in ambulatory medical record systems (AMRS), which are electronic databases accessible to medical professionals. By using both AMRs and EMRs, medical professionals can view a patient's complete and accurate medical history.

## BENEFITS OF AMBULATORY EHR

- 

EHR supports ambulatory service safety and delivery of high-quality care.


- 

By eliminating time-consuming, paper-related tasks, ambulatory services can reduce overtime expenses and reallocate staff workloads.


- 

EHRs improve efficiencies throughout ambulatory services.


- 

Medical professionals can access their patients' charts and schedule anywhere, in real-time.


- 

When the patients are satisfied with ambulatory services, they return to the service for future procedures and also recommend it to the people in their circle.


- 

EHRs provide ambulatory services access to statistics that allows them to perform detailed case costing and analysis more effectively and identify benchmark data, historical patterns and optimize the scheduling of patients, rooms, medical professionals, equipment, staff, and anesthesia personnel.





## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ACUTE CARE EHR AND AMBULATORY EHR



### ACUTE CARE EHR



### AMBULATORY EHR

#### Reports and summaries

The differences between ambulatory EHRs and acute care EHR systems are primarily about the types of reports and summaries derived from a patient's clinical information. For example, inpatient EHRs require features to prepare discharge summaries, whereas ambulatory systems require treatment summaries.

#### Metrics tracked

They also differ in the types of quality measures patient systems must track. The Clinical Quality Measures for acute care systems track a larger number of metrics. But, in the case of ambulatory care, the quality measures focus primarily on immunizations, management of chronic conditions, and preventative screenings.

#### Differences in Certification

In the era of Meaningful Use, the differences in these EHR settings were recognized by the Office of the National Coordinator, Health IT. When it comes to EHR Certification, some elements are common to both acute care and ambulatory systems – privacy and security standards, keeping medication lists, problem lists, allergy lists, etc., But some differences do exist.

- 1
 Acute care systems, for instance, require a specific set of capabilities for Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE). Ambulatory EHRs should be capable of electronic prescribing to outside pharmacies. Acute care systems do not need such a requirement as the medications are in-house and are handled through Computerized Physician Order Entry.
- 2
 For acute care patients, the discharge summaries need to be accessible electronically and on time. For ambulatory patients, the discharge summaries need to be created for each appointment on a "build-as-you-go" basis.
- 3
 Clinical Quality Measures for acute care systems measure different things. 15 criteria need to be addressed for acute care systems, which include - acute stroke management, emergency Department throughput times, and deep venous thrombosis (DVT) prevention in bed-ridden patients. Ambulatory EHRs, on the other hand, need to report on 3 core measures and 3-of-38 "menu" items, which are focused on the management of immunizations, chronic conditions and disease-prevention screenings.

## HOW TO CHOOSE BETWEEN AMBULATORY EHR VS. ACUTE CARE EHR

So, after all this knowledge about ambulatory EHR vs acute care EHR, how to choose a system that would work the best for you?

- 1 An ambulatory electronic health records system may be the best fit for a single practice.
- 2 If you belong to a chain of practices, you could probably use either an EHR for ambulatory care or an EHR for acute care.
- 3 It makes sense that you should implement both if you own a hospital or a chain of hospitals.
- 4 If you are working with a low to moderate budget, then you may go with a smaller, specialized EHR as per your need. Despite the existence of nearly-do-it-all systems, small and specialty EHR systems have gained massive popularity in the past few years because of their cost-effectiveness.
- 5 With that said, each healthcare practice and organization is different, with different needs and requirements so to choose the right EHR, the first step is to know what you'll be using it for. No matter which EHR you go for. It should have proper capabilities and functionality to suit the unique needs of your facility.

Currently, an inpatient facility cannot operate well with an EHR that is designed for ambulatory settings and vice versa. Of course, ambulatory EHR can be accessed through the cloud while in a hospital and copied into inpatient documentation, but it is full of hassles, requiring manual work. Besides, that Interoperability between the two is also a significant concern. However, in the foreseeable future, inpatient and outpatient EHRs are expected to be connected in this way as the technology progresses.

## CONCLUSION



Choosing an EHR is a lengthy process, but for a decision as important as this one, it's necessary. Purchasing an EHR on impulse isn't an option, and you want your practice on board with you. The entire process of making the right choice can take some time but if your selection process is critical, methodological and inquisitive, you will undoubtedly be happy with your final EHR choice and the benefits you receive from its implementation.

## ABOUT MEDICOREACH

MedicoReach is a leader in the field of healthcare marketing. We provide accurate and quality data to support the multichannel campaigns of healthcare organizations. With the super of highly-quality data, we help marketing and sales professionals reach out to targeted healthcare executives and professionals to increase brand awareness.

Our data solutions are designed with utmost perfections and expertise. With a dedicated team and best-in-class healthcare email and mailing lists, we help marketers connect with prospect efficiently. we offer a wide range of healthcare email and mailing lists which include physicians email list, nurse email list, pharmacist email list, dentists email list and more.



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