

How to pick an EHR system

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By [Jay A. Shorr, CMBM, CAC](#)

Q. What is the best way to pick an electronic health records (EHR) system, and what incentive packages are available?

A. If you are looking for a system that will make your practice more efficient, make sure that you research the type of program that will best serve both your practice management and EHR needs. Ask vendors whether their new systems are compatible with your old system, so that merging data can be a simple process. Remember, however, that many times, merging data may not be a wise approach because you may have faulty or old data that may not be useful in the conversion process (for example: patients who have died or moved or for whom you no longer have accurate address and insurance information). If you are looking to take advantage of the federal government's incentive program, you must act in accordance with the published guidelines. To be eligible, your EHR program must be certified by a testing and certification body authorized by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (a list of programs certified for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services EHR incentive programs is available at www.healthit.hhs.gov/CHPL) and be implemented between 2011 and 2016. Your incentive will vary by the date of implementation.

Answers to readers' questions were provided by Jay A. Shorr, BA, CMBM, CAC, of The Best Medical Business Solutions, Tamarac, Florida. Send your technology-related questions to medec@advanstar.com