

# Why We Use An Electronic Medical Record (EMR)

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In 2004, President George W. Bush issued an executive order to develop and implement a nationwide health information technology infrastructure to improve the quality and efficiency of health care. He appointed David Brailer, M.D., as the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology.

One of Dr. Brailer's first goals is to encourage physician groups and hospitals across the nation to adopt EMRs. Several studies show that EMRs help physicians improve patient safety. These same studies indicate that EMRs also offer efficiencies for both patients and clinicians.

**Advanced Healthcare is a local pioneer** in implementing this technology to better serve our patients. While other local physician groups and hospital systems are just beginning to implement this technology, we began our EMR implementation in 1999. In fact, Advanced Healthcare is the only large physician group in the greater Milwaukee area where all physicians use an EMR in their daily practice.

## What is an EMR (Electronic Medical Record)?

An EMR is a tool used by physicians and other healthcare professionals to assist in providing and documenting patient care. The federal government and many other agencies believe an EMR is a foundation component for providing quality health care. When you visit a healthcare provider or other professional at an Advanced Healthcare clinic, the EMR allows your caregiver to review information from your past visits and to record new information about you. It also helps support your physician's critical medical decision making by providing instantaneous access to your current medication prescriptions and your medical history, including surgeries and prior medical conditions.

## What are some of the advantages an EMR provides?

### • Immediate Access to your Medical History.

Advanced Healthcare has 14 clinics in 4 counties (Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington and Waukesha). Because Advanced Healthcare utilizes an EMR, your healthcare provider can access your medical information from any prior Advanced Healthcare clinic visit, regardless of the location. This saves you (and your provider) time by eliminating the need to transport paper records between the clinic locations you visit.



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### • Accurate and Safe Medication Prescription.

Medication errors are a significant problem in healthcare today. Studies from the Institute of Medicine have identified over 7,000 patient deaths per year from medication errors. Handwritten prescriptions are sometimes misread due to illegibility. The EMR provides a computer generated prescription and also performs instantaneous drug/drug and drug/allergy checking for new medications that may be prescribed for you, to identify potentially harmful reactions. Medications refills and new prescriptions may be faxed to participating pharmacies to eliminate delays in your medical treatment.

### • Best Practice Alerts.

These proactive alerts provide reminders for diagnostic tests, immunizations and exams that might be due. This kind of tool can aid the physicians in preventing and managing chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, asthma and other health conditions.

### • After Visit Summaries.

Patients may receive a printed document after their appointment with specific instructions for tests, treatment and follow-up.

## How does an EMR help lower total healthcare costs?

### • Alternate Medication Alerts.

When entering a medication order, specifically for a selected expensive medication, a physician may be immediately alerted with information to offer the patient a less expensive medication that works similarly to the more expensive counterpart.

### • Reducing Duplication and Errors.

The EMR warns health care providers if duplicate tests have been ordered. This saves money for both patients and payers.

### • Preventive Care and Disease Management .

The EMR supports early preventive care counseling and improves ability to manage chronic illnesses. With the ability to track treatment and patterns of care, physicians and patients can be reminded at the appropriate time for recommended tests, exams and immunizations. This can help avert costly and complex healthcare in the long run.