Selecting an EMR: Ready, Set……Go Compare!

Action Items:

- **Month 1**
  - Get Ready
  - Physician champion
  - EMR project team
  - Project manager
  - Readiness assessment
  - Action plan to mitigate risks
  - Establish meaningful, achievable EMR goals
  - Establish effective, open communications

- **Month 2**
  - Set up for success
  - Project plan, follow basic project management principles
  - Map current office work flows, design future workflows
  - Assess EMR best uses, create functionality scorecard
  - Study single vendor vs. best of breed strategy
  - Study ASP vs. client server set up option
  - Local systems for EMR to “connect to” (interfaces)
  - Data that EMR needs to capture
  - Top Ten list of system requirements

- **Month 3-4**
  - Go compare
  - Evaluate vendor information from sources:
    - EMR Comparison tool
    - Networking with colleagues
    - CCHIT certification list
    - Other consultant ratings and tools
    - TMA EMR Comparison (Texas)
    - Vendor websites and literature
    - Health IT conferences and EMR vendor tradeshows
    - Listservs, websites (professional organizations)
  - Create short list of 3+ vendors
  - Detailed research → RFP, demos and site visits
  - Focus on functionality and future workflow needs

- **Month 4**
  - Select EMR
  - Assess:
    - EMR Comparison tools
    - Physician/networking references
    - CCHIT certification
    - Other consultant ratings and tools
    - Requirements scorecard
    - Listservs (professional organizations)
    - Site visits and demo results
    - Local market penetration of vendors
    - Cost comparison
    - Customer support ratings
    - Alignment with EMR goals
    - Vendor physicians employed and/or active physician users group
    - Vendor experience with clients of same specialty
    - RFP responses, vendor size, #years in business, company vision

Objectives:

- **Month 1**
  - Identify risks that may adversely impact EMR implementation
  - Begin preparing for change
  - Garner buy-in and support from staff and clinical colleagues
  - Establish goal-oriented team
  - Create effective decision-making team
  - Establish a collaborative, communicative environment

- **Month 2**
  - Keep selection project on target with goals and timelines
  - Identify EMR functionalities needed (functional requirements)
  - Identify data reporting needs (data reporting requirements)
  - Identify systems for EMR to “connect to” (interface requirements)
  - Understand and compare EMR set-up options
  - Understand and compare vendor strategy options
  - Prioritize needs to facilitate comparison (Top Ten list)
  - Critically think about office workflows to determine what the EMR needs to facilitate to improve practice

- **Month 3-4**
  - Know where to go and what to look for
  - Identify a short list of vendors to evaluate in detail
  - Use EMR functionality scorecard, Top Ten list and EMR goals to guide evaluation on identified needs (your grocery list)
  - Focus site visits and demos on usability and support
  - Identify detailed, multi-year costs for each vendor

- **Month 4**
  - Use all information gathered to rank, select an EMR system
  - Begin contract negotiations with selected vendor
  - Consider starting negotiations with two companies if both meet requirements, rank closely

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