

Next Generation CDSS: Patient-Centered Workflow

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In the design of successful health IT implementations, patients matter. Although the importance of addressing the workflow needs of clinicians cannot be overstated, focusing on patient needs helps ensure newly designed workflows leverage the full capabilities of IT tools and embedded clinical decision support systems (CDSS). In addition, this delivers the clinical and financial outcomes desired by organizations. Entities that ignore the needs of clinicians in designing health IT-driven workflows can expect to experience either low levels of health IT adoption among clinicians, suboptimal patient care results, or both. Focusing on patient care provides a framework in which to create effective workflows that leverage new technologies and CDSS to deliver promised value to patients and caregivers.

To effectively implement CDSS and health IT, organizations must understand in depth the capabilities of the available information technology, the requirements of the practicing clinicians, and the expected outcomes of all impacted stakeholders (i.e., patient, clinician, organization, etc.). Teams built from a cross section of disciplines and perspectives hold the greatest promise in designing effective workflows embedded with CDSS. Building a comprehensive, clinically relevant workflow across caregivers allows for efficient deployment of CDSS and the use of resources to achieve specific patient goals.

The specific needs of the healthcare industry make it an ideal match with workflow concepts. Healthcare involves complex procedures that include both clinical and administrative tasks. As a result, workflow increases efficiency and effectiveness through the maximal integration and use of relevant, timely information, the main goal of any CDSS. Readily available health information technologies also offer invaluable tools such as single sign-on (SSO), roaming desktops, location awareness, and fast-user switching to support impactful patient-centered workflows.

Patient-centered workflow requires stringing together individual steps, linking processes, and bridging activities by multiple caregivers to create an effective orchestration of resources to enhance the health of the patient. Technology provides only the toolkit to achieve these workflows. Knowledgeable professionals from multiple disciplines synergistically working together hold the potential to build efficient models for care. Focusing on the patient, rather than the technology or an individual participant in the workflow, provides the greatest opportunity to achieve successful outcomes that benefit the clinician, organization, and patient.