



THE FUTURE IS TODAY

BC PHYSICIANS + INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY = BETTER HEALTH



FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Dear colleague,

Funding through the Physician Information Technology Office (PITO) program has enabled a large number of physicians' offices across the province to implement Electronic Medical Record systems (EMRs).

Many enthusiastic general practice and specialist physicians are now seeing the positive impact on patient care and office administration that EMRs have brought to their practices. Most will tell you that the transition takes forethought and work, but when the system is in place, the benefits outweigh the initial investment of time and money.

Almost half of BC physicians in independent practice are now using an EMR, including almost all large full-service family practice clinics (clinics with six or more physicians), and about one-third of surgeons and medical consultants. Adoption is highest in smaller and rural communities, with many communities having reached 100 per cent EMR use. We would encourage GPs in smaller practices and specialists, particularly in the urban centres, to look seriously at EMR adoption.

We can all see how the Internet has changed the way we book a vacation or pay a bill, and EMRs and e-health present the same kinds of opportunities to enhance how we practice medicine and how our patients manage their own health. Health authorities and the provincial government are making constant progress in providing a wider range of relevant patient information to physicians via the EMR. To take advantage of these new connections, the first step is moving your office onto an EMR system tailored to your needs. With the provincial funding and professional expertise currently available through PITO, now is a good time to make that change. We invite you to join us on this important professional journey that assists both your patients and your practice.

More detail, including the contact information for your Relationship Manager, is available at www.pito.bc.ca

Dr. Gordon Mackie

Co-chair, PITO Steering Committee

“We made the transition in just one weekend, five years ago. Since then, the expenses have fallen and the EMR-based system has paid for itself. We get lab results electronically from the hospital and, overall, we offer more efficient and timely patient care.”

For the family physicians at the Comox Medical Clinic, moving to an EMR seemed to make good business sense. In the five years since they made the change, the decision has paid off. The clinic is now seeing a record number of patients and the partners are pleased that their investment is paying off both clinically and financially.

Dr. Rickard Potter-Cogan notes that since adopting

the EMR, the group is able to manage the clinic more efficiently and provide a higher level of service to patients. The EMR's attributes allow them to spend more time discussing patients' concerns and less time looking for information.

Thanks to the EMR, patients with chronic diseases now have a better opportunity to get involved in their own

medical care. The EMR allows the physician to show the patient a graph of their lab results and other data, see the impact of treatment and monitor their overall health progress. Some physicians are even starting to provide Personal Health Record systems connected to the EMR so their patients can log in from home and access their own data.

THE ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD

Most physicians who have adopted Electronic Medical Record (EMR) systems will be quick to tell you that the transition has been worthwhile. They see many benefits of using up-to-date EMR systems, including better patient care and smoother office management.

EMRs provide comprehensive, computerized records for each patient, replacing traditional paper charts. The EMR also provides an electronic gateway to an increasing number of clinical applications, which can be found or will soon be available via your local health authority or through the provincial government's e-health initiatives.

For example, lab results are almost universally available across the province thanks to interfaces with the various public and private laboratories. Physicians find that the ability to retrieve lab results and make immediate decisions about patient care is one of the major assets of having an EMR system. Depending on the services

currently provided by your health authority, you may also be able to access imaging reports, medication profiles, hospital discharge reports and other data. As the trend toward e-health grows, so will the variety of information that you will be able to receive and use.

The EMR also provides physicians and their staff with the tools to analyze their data to: identify patients in need of recalls for follow-up care of chronic diseases, establish and track patient care plans, better manage patients with complex care requirements, and ensure billing of the associated Chronic Disease Management and Complex Care incentive fees. An important part of the PITO program is supporting physicians in adopting these aspects of the EMR through the availability of advanced training, physician and MOA peer support, and online resources. The net result can be improved care, greater physician satisfaction, greater patient satisfaction and enhanced practice revenue.



“Research your needs and have a clear idea of what you want – some programs are better with billing, others are better at doing CDM; visit other clinics that are operating on an EMR...before you take a decision.”

Dr. Karen Forgie, of Medical Associates clinic in Sechelt, who has been using an EMR since 1996, took the lead, did the research and then recommended a PITO-qualified vendor in 2008. “We are a small community and we rely heavily on locums. We knew that they were frustrated with the old DOS-based system and that

was all the more reason to change,” Dr. Forgie says. The physicians wanted an EMR with features such as prescription writing and decision support for management of chronic disease patients. With the physicians on board, the next job was convincing the staff. They were a bit hesitant at first. “Change isn’t too common in this

area, but once they could see the benefits of the new functionality, they were interested,” says Barbara Bott, clinic supervisor in Sechelt. The new EMR helps with Chronic Disease Management by allowing physicians and staff to generate and record prescriptions, download lab results, complete forms and produce referral letters.



PITO HELPS WITH EMR TRANSITION

The Physician Information Technology Office (PITO) is here to help you make the transition to, and realize the value from an EMR system. PITO was formed in 2006 as part of the Physician Master Agreement between the provincial Ministry of Health Services and the British Columbia Medical Association (BCMA). PITO has both funding and professional support available to assist you. Our support team can work with you from the early planning of your EMR needs through to transition and follow-up. We provide a 70 per cent financial contribution toward your costs, a listing of PITO-qualified EMR solutions that have been extensively

conformance tested, and the support of physician and Medical Office Assistants (MOA) peer mentors or local experts. PITO also assists you in connecting your practice to the Ministry of Health Services’ Private Physician Network (PPN), your gateway to the secure health system network that connects to the health authorities and the provincial e-health systems. The PPN is like an Internet connection. It gives you access to the Internet, but ensures that sensitive, confidential patient data (lab results, prescriptions) stay inside the segregated private network rather than travelling over the open Internet.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

PITO Solution Offering	Annual Funding per Eligible Physician Unit	
	Maximum Eligible Costs	Maximum PITO Contribution (70%)
1. Electronic Medical Record	Typical Range	
Implementation (one-time costs + Y1 license)	\$10,000	\$4,900-\$9,800
Y1 Annual Operating Costs	\$4,080	\$2,868-\$4,080
Y2+ Ongoing Annual Operating Costs	\$6,420/year	\$3,264-\$6,420
2. Hardware & Other Implementation Costs		
Hardware: Computers, laptops, tablets, printers and scanners that meet your EMR vendor's minimum specifications for use with the EMR	\$7,000	\$4,900
Other one-time costs: Local Area Network (LAN), voice dictation software, MS Office, conversion of existing EMR data, custom interfaces/templates (see <i>PITO Policies for full list of eligible costs</i>)		
3. Secure Network		
Private Physician Network (PPN) connection	Service provided by MoHS - No fee	N/A
4. Implementation & Transition Support		
Implementation support provided by PITO Local Relationship Managers	Service provided by PITO	N/A

For more detailed information go to: www.pito.bc.ca/benefits

FUNDING AVAILABLE TO PHYSICIANS

All independently practicing physicians in BC are eligible for the PITO program, provided they demonstrate a clinical need in an ambulatory setting, and a reasonable minimum time in active practice each year. The Ministry of Health Services has committed approximately \$108 million over the six-year term of the Physician Master Agreement, which ends on March 31, 2012. PITO reimburses 70 per cent of eligible costs. Your office contributes the remaining 30 per cent.

Implementation includes EMR software, hardware (e.g. computers, printers and scanners) and other one-time start up costs, such as custom interfaces, the transfer of existing data and the set up of Local Area Networks. You can also benefit from the services and experience of both fellow physicians and PITO staff members.

Costs vary depending on the size of your office and the EMR system that you choose. If you are already using an older EMR system you may still be eligible for funding through the PITO program. More information about eligibility and a more detailed funding formula are available on the PITO website at www.pito.bc.ca

Vendor EMR pricing includes one-time costs for licensing, training and configuration, and ongoing costs for professional hosting (servers, 24x7 monitoring, maintenance, helpdesk, backups and upgrades) at a 99.99 per cent EMR availability. There are no additional costs for servers, backup systems, installation, or upgrades that would be typical if you maintained the server in your own office.



“I have incredible flexibility in where I do my work. I can monitor lab reports from anywhere and, on home visits, I have the patient’s chart right in front of me, exactly as it would appear as if I was in my office.”

When they opened their office in 2003, Dr. Leo Wong and his wife Flora installed an EMR system. It was only when Dr. Young Suh joined them four years later—with 12 boxes of paper charts – that the two family physicians really appreciated the efficiency of their previously paperless state. With some immediate work from the

partners and the help of a medical office assistant who gradually scanned in Dr. Suh’s charts, the office was once again paperless.

Dr. Wong is now one of the Physician Information Technology Office’s Physician Peer Mentors, helping others adopt EMR technology. He enthuses about the flexibility that the EMR system offers.

With rapid access to both lab results and charts, he can make immediate decisions about follow-up care. The practice staff is able to focus on clinical work, such as running reports to ensure that chronic disease patients are up-to-date with their care, rather than searching for paper charts.

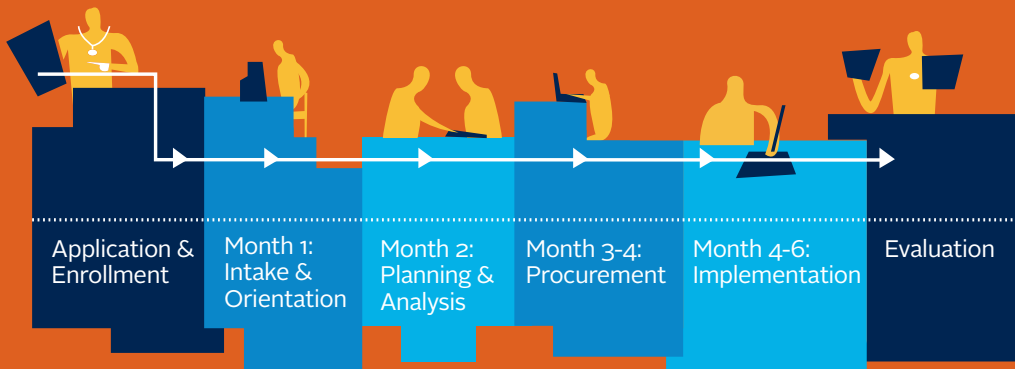
BENEFITS TO YOU & YOUR PATIENTS

EMR systems can improve health outcomes for your patients, create a more efficient and flexible work environment and increase productivity in your office. How? EMRs provide you with faster access to lab results, charts and other patient data from any computer with Internet access. Whether you are in your office, making rounds at the hospital or working from home, you can pull up the information you need and initiate follow-up actions using the EMR. Overall, the patient chart data is organized for more efficient, logical and reliable access and useful features like automated reminders help your staff stay on top of patient follow-ups and ongoing office needs. Increasingly, locums are saying that they will only practice in clinics that have EMRs as the information is legible and organized, and the practice workflow is supported.

In your own practice, the EMR system can help you automate referrals, call-backs, prescription-writing and end-of-day reports. In addition, with a few clicks, lab, imaging and other results from external providers can be transferred directly into the patient’s file, reducing redundant tests due to lost paper results and expediting more timely patient care. Electronic referrals (eReferrals) are also now available in many BC communities where physicians use the same EMR product, significantly improving continuity of care in referrals to specialists, or hand-offs from clinics to a family physician.

Many EMR users believe that the investment of time and money in getting the system up and running is easily recouped by the convenience and office efficiencies the EMR provides. This value will only increase over the next two to three years as more and more information moves online, including prescribing, referrals, and requisitions.

TYPICAL PROCESS



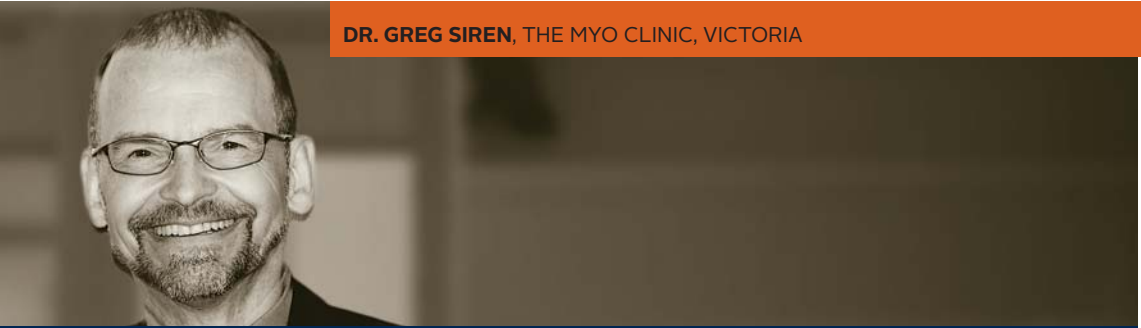
PITO HAS THE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE & PEER SUPPORT TO HELP YOU CHOOSE AN EMR SYSTEM THAT SUITS THE NEEDS OF YOUR OFFICE FOR A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION.

THE IMPLEMENTATION & TRANSITION SUPPORT PROGRAM

PITO's goal is to make the transition to an EMR system as easy as possible. We recognize that practices vary tremendously and that changing how an office functions can be challenging.

We have the technical expertise and peer support to help you choose an EMR system that suits the needs of your office. The PITO Implementation and Transition Support Program (ITSP) is designed to be both flexible and responsive to your particular needs, and it is provided free of charge.

We connect you with a Relationship Manager (RM) who will get to know you and your goals and give you information and advice to help you choose EMR options that can work well for your office. From there, he or she will be able to walk you through planning and implementation in detail. Using a framework that has worked for others, your RM can assist with practical details. These include a readiness assessment, action plan, budget templates, procurement support and a "go live" check list.



“Keeping data off-site requires less maintenance and attention to system management. Having a simpler IT network located within your office reduces both cost and upkeep hassles for physicians and practice managers.”

As one of PITO's Physician Peer Mentors, Dr. Greg Siren of *The myo Clinic* works with practices in the Victoria area to help them make the transition to an EMR.

He notes that the existing IT capabilities vary from practice to practice. However, moving to an ASP model and minimizing the infrastructure that needs to be housed,

backed up and otherwise maintained at the office is a great benefit to physicians.

A family physician with a specialized practice in the treatment of acute and chronic myofascial pain, Dr. Siren is establishing a patient portal as part of his own office EMR. His patients will soon be able to make their own appointments, complete

registration information and look at elements of their own clinical records online. Dr. Siren's EMR vendor is hosting the patient portal on the EMR ASP server so that he can provide this service without having to deal with all of the technical set up and management.

APPLICATION SERVICE PROVIDER (ASP)— REMOTE HOSTING

The PITO-qualified EMR systems use an Application Services Provider (ASP) remote hosting model to minimize the resources that physicians would otherwise need to spend maintaining a secure EMR hosted on a server within the practice. The ASP remote hosting model also makes it easier to support electronic transfer of reports and requisitions such as referrals, prescriptions and lab and imaging reports.

Instead of maintaining a computer server in a closet in the physician office, and having the vendor “dial in” remotely to perform maintenance and upgrades, the server is “hosted” by the physician's EMR vendor in a commercial-grade data centre with 24x7 monitoring and support, and service level guarantees. The physician accesses the EMR from his/her clinic over the Private Physician Network, in a similar manner to accessing their EMR from home.

ASP-hosting is now a common model for hosting of important business applications. Entire health authorities operate their hospital information systems out of a single data centre. Banks do not keep servers on site at their individual branches, instead storing them centrally and accessing them over private networks. This model allows these organizations to better integrate their systems to provide more seamless customer service (linking mortgage and chequing data, or lab and medication data), helps them to better manage privacy and security (e.g. no data left on computers in bank branches), and relieves the local bank branches and hospitals of the burden of managing the technology. These are the same reasons the ASP-hosting approach is supported by the PITO program for use by physician offices.



PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT

PITO is a comprehensive program designed to help you learn more about EMRs and how you can make the EMR work for your practice. In addition to the support of your PITO Relationship Manager, PITO can connect you with a Physician Peer Mentor and MOA Peer Mentor to provide local peer support.

These physicians and MOAs have experienced their own EMR implementation and assisted dozens of other practices, so they know what it looks like from the frontline perspective. They can assist you in deciding if an EMR is right for your practice, what to look for when choosing an EMR and how to plan for a successful implementation. They can be available to support you during the throes of implementation and assist you during the months after implementation with tips and tricks to get the most out of your EMR.

PITO and the Physician and MOA Peer Mentors are also establishing local Physician User Groups (PUGs) across the province to further peer support and collaboration, including accredited continuing medical education (CME) events related to EMR use. The PUGs and CME events are focused on effective adoption of the EMR in day-to-day practice, and learning to use the more advanced functionality to support Chronic Disease Management, Complex Care, and other clinical priorities.

Communities of Practice

Your decision to move to an EMR is also an opportunity to make connections to other clinics and services through a Community of Practice. A Community of Practice consists of a group of practices or a group of physicians that decide to use a common EMR because they are working in a particular service area or collaborating to improve services to a shared patient population.

The Community of Practice linkage provides for easier physician collaboration and peer support. It also has significant practical implications, such as supporting shared out-of-hours services and locum coverage.

The new Divisions of Family Practice, now being established through an initiative of the General Practice Service Committee, are a means to help groups of physicians work more closely together at the local or regional level to serve patients and work effectively with their local health authority. The Community of Practice model supports the goals of the Divisions in areas such as attachment initiatives and integrated maternity and mental health care. The geographic areas of the Divisions and Communities of Practice are typically the same, with common or linked physician leadership.

FIND OUT MORE

PITO is a comprehensive program designed to help you learn more about EMRs and how you can make this technology work for your practice. To find out more about the patient care and practice benefits of moving to an EMR system, as well as the professional and financial help available to you, please visit our website.

The PITO site features useful case studies from physician offices, large and small, that have successfully implemented EMRs. There is also a section for frequently asked questions.

www.pito.bc.ca

PITO PHYSICIAN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OFFICE

