

Common EHR-Related Malpractice Problems

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1. Copy and Paste

- ⇒ Many doctors are tempted to copy a note from a prior encounter and make changes as appropriate. This leads to a few potential problems.
- ⇒ Sometimes physicians forget to update the note with the appropriate changes when copying and pasting

2. Drop-down menus

- ⇒ Drop-down menus can often be the source of a user error that leads to a malpractice suit. Not only can users click the wrong thing in the menu, such as the wrong patient symptom, but these menus lead to structured information that physicians can easily overlook when reviewing a note.

3. Use of templates

- ⇒ One trend seen related to EHR-induced malpractice suits comes from template use. Templates are supposed to help physicians do something more comprehensive, but often templates have a lot of old information that carries forward
- ⇒ In order to avoid falling into this trap, it is advised that physicians proofread and modify templates if they are going to be used.

4. Alert Fatigue

- ⇒ The e-prescribing module in an EHR is a potential landmine for malpractice. Alerts indicating when there is a problem with medication dosage or drug-drug interaction will pop up as practitioners are inputting data into the EHR. As a result, doctors might get annoyed and develop alert fatigue and they just turn the alerts off.
- ⇒ While this is understandable, turning off the alerts could mean a potential significant problem could go undetected.

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5. Clinical Decision Support Alerts

⇒ Another prompt that goes ignored, often to the detriment of the patient and the doctor, are clinical decision support (CDS) alerts. These are clinically relevant educational materials that come up as the practitioner is documenting in the EHR. Practitioners should ignore these at their own peril. If anything, physicians should document the reason why they overrode the CDS alert.

6. Missing information

⇒ The idea of physicians missing a vital piece of information in the EHR can be either a user or a technical error. These types of problems are most likely to pop up when a physician is using a new system.