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Comment on Strategy on Reducing Regulatory and Administrative Burden Relating to the Use of Health IT and EHRs

I am board certified in Family Medicine, former faculty with Cox Family Medicine Residency in Springfield MO as Clinical Assistant Professor Community and Family Medicine, Certified Medical Director, past President of Medical Staff at local hospital, sit on Illinois Board of Medical Director Society as Secretary Treasurer.

I’ve had experience with EHRs since 1996. I worked for one of the first EHR vendors and helped them to develop their product. In my various roles, I’ve learned the EHR needs to be a tool provider’s use in medical management just like we use a stethoscope. Providers should not have to think how to use it.

The current government driven EHR rules from various aspects force providers into thinking how to document that we offered / discussed many government mandated / requested services patients may or may not desire. As a result the EHR systems forces themselves into the exam room, and for many patient encounter places itself of patient care. As result many of us have hired scribes to keep our focus on the patient and not the computer.

The government rules on EHR systems are not robust enough to keep current with latest medical research. Examples include but are not limited to blood pressure goals in elderly (ACC 2017 Guidelines for the Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Management of High Blood Pressure in Adults), or diabetic goals in the elderly (many articles and society recommendations).

Deregulation back to the point where patient care comes first is needed. Otherwise many providers I work with have told me they are considering returning to a cash base system and will forget about participating with government regulated health care coverages. The other option is one similar to European models where everyone in the nation uses the same database program which works behind the encounter to generate helpful patient education, and useful reports for users.

Respectfully,

Richard Rethorst MD, CMD