

EHR Transitions and Innovations: Epic and Oracle Lead the Way



The electronic health record (EHR) landscape is rapidly developing, with significant changes announced by major healthcare systems and tech giants in September. ChristianaCare and UAB Health are planning to migrate to Epic Systems, while Oracle Health is making strides by securing two critical access hospitals for its CommunityWorks suite and aiming to redefine the role of EHRs. How do these transitions impact healthcare delivery and patient care?

Epic: The Platform of Choice for Health Systems

Epic Systems is cementing its position as a leading EHR provider, as evidenced by recent client acquisitions. Delaware-based ChristianaCare, previously utilising Cerner for its EHR needs, has announced a switch to Epic over the next two years. The health system emphasises that this transition is rooted in a commitment to enhancing the caregiver and patient experience while improving the quality and accessibility of care. The implementation of this multi-year project is expected to go live by early fall 2026.

Similarly, UAB Health System, based in Birmingham, Alabama, is another major institution migrating from Cerner to Epic. Following an extensive review process, UAB's decision is driven by the need for better cost efficiency, operational scalability, and streamlined processes. UAB has a two-and-a-half-year timeline to fully implement Epic's system, with \$380 million allocated for this project. The goal is to bolster EHR management, revenue cycle, and clinical research, focusing on improved patient and staff experiences.

Oracle's CommunityWorks: Tailored for Critical Access Hospitals

While Epic focuses on larger health systems, Oracle Health has its sights on smaller hospitals, specifically those in rural or critical access regions. Oracle's CommunityWorks EHR suite recently gained two new clients: Shoshone Medical Centre in Idaho and Eureka Springs Hospital in Arkansas. These hospitals, each with less than 30 beds, are looking to Oracle's solution to consolidate clinical, financial, and operational data. CommunityWorks aims to improve patient care coordination and streamline administrative tasks, which are vital for smaller hospitals needing efficient, user-friendly technology to enhance both care quality and safety.

The adoption of CommunityWorks demonstrates Oracle's capacity to address unique challenges faced by smaller healthcare facilities. Additionally, the company has enhanced its offerings by integrating tools like the AI-enabled Clinical Digital Assistant, the RevElate accounting tool, and Seamless Exchange for care coordination. These tools are designed to help clinicians and staff reduce operational burdens, enabling them to focus on providing optimal care.

Oracle's Vision: Moving Beyond Traditional EHRs

Oracle Health is not just focusing on expanding its EHR client base; it's also actively seeking to redefine the concept of the EHR itself. In a recent blog post, Seema Verma, general manager of Oracle Health and Life Sciences, articulated a vision that goes beyond simply updating current EHR systems. Verma emphasised the need to change the structure of EHRs, suggesting that many existing systems were built with revenue management, not clinical workflows, as their primary focus. As a result, these systems often contribute to clinician burnout and fail to meet the needs of both providers and patients.

Oracle plans to use its robust database management, cloud technologies, cybersecurity, AI, and enterprise solutions to deliver a more comprehensive healthcare ecosystem. The company envisions a reimagined EHR system that aligns with the clinical workflow and drives better healthcare outcomes. This vision will be further discussed at Oracle's Health Summit, where the company plans to showcase its strategy for creating a more interconnected healthcare industry that supports clinicians and enhances the patient experience.

The EHR industry is in a phase of transformation, with both Epic and Oracle at the forefront of these changes. Epic's growing popularity among large health systems like ChristianaCare and UAB Health underscores its role as a leading choice for comprehensive, scalable EHR solutions. Meanwhile, Oracle's CommunityWorks demonstrates its ability to cater to the needs of smaller, critical access hospitals, providing technology that enhances operational efficiency and care quality. Oracle's ambitious vision to go "beyond the EHR" represents a forward-thinking approach to healthcare technology, promising to shift EHRs from administrative tools to truly clinician-centred solutions. These shifts and innovations will be crucial in shaping the future of patient care and the overall healthcare experience.

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