

# 3 EHR Selection Criteria

for Your Independent  
Practice

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# 3 EHR Selection Criteria for Your Independent Practice

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**Electronic health records** (EHR) systems are no longer luxuries for small and independent practices. If you want to deliver to the modern standards of patient care, while enjoying government incentives, you have no choice but to implement a **meaningful use-certified** EHR system.

EHR requirements are complex and vary from practice to practice. But the benefits of EHRs are common across practices—they reduce patient care costs and improve patient safety. The effective use of EHRs enhances patient experience and improves professional satisfaction. These benefits prove that EHRs are a good investment.

Therefore, choosing the right EHR system is a critical decision that needs careful planning. This article provides the necessary resources to search for and quickly select the right EHR solution that helps you save time and money. We've identified the top criteria that should influence your purchase decision.

Read on to understand the three important points that you should consider when selecting an EHR system.



User friendliness



Essential features



Customer support

# Ensure That the System Is User Friendly

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One of the most important aspects of EHR software is ease of use. If you struggle to use it, you'll have a messy workflow and find it tough to accomplish routine tasks. Because you use the EHR system daily, you don't want the system to add to your workload or keep you away from patients for a long time.

Thankfully, most vendors offer live demonstrations and free trials of their EHR systems to prospective buyers. Take advantage of these freebies to evaluate whether a system will benefit—or be detrimental—to your small practice.

Some common types of EHR demos are listed below:

- **Non-interactive video:** Provides a quick glance into a system's features, functionality and user interface. Note that these videos are created by vendors to show their product in the best light. Therefore, choose this only when you have to shortlist numerous EHR vendors and lack time for more detailed demos.
- **Interactive trial demo:** May require more time than a non-interactive video. Start by testing the system's user friendliness. Ask as many questions as you can: Is it easy and quick to perform routine tasks? Is the product intuitive? Can you find patient information quickly?
- **Vendor-directed demo:** Takes longer than the options above and needs advance scheduling. During the demo, test the system's features and functionality. Make a list of the criteria you want the EHR system to fulfill as well as doubts/questions that weren't solved in the interactive trial demo.

- **Live site demo:** Requires many resources at your small practice and offers the most insight into the user friendliness of an EHR. It requires a lot of time and resources, so most practices limit these to their final shortlisted vendors.

In addition to system demos, most vendors offer free trials to prospective buyers. We recommend testing an EHR system of your choice to evaluate its user friendliness.

Check out our [EHR software market page](#) to get a better understanding of the different functionalities offered by various vendors. Also, read user reviews of different EHR software that includes the ease-of-use rating submitted by all users as per their individual experience. You can also call us at **(844) 686-5616** for a free consultation with an EHR software advisor.

## Identify the Essential Features for Your Practice

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Finding the right EHR system for your independent practice is no easy task, whether you're implementing one for the first time or [replacing an existing one](#).

Keep in mind that the software you select should offer the [essential features](#) you absolutely need. As most EHR systems are multifaceted and complex, it can be tough to test one before selection.

Therefore, it's important to have a thorough understanding of the features and functionality your small practice needs. This will save you from wasting your money and time on the wrong system.

Follow these steps to identify the essential features for your practice:

- Form a small team of staff members who are willing to be EHR project managers.
- Ensure that at least one of the staff members is a physician.
- Identify your practice's goals/objectives and the benefits you seek to gain from an EHR system.
- Make a note of the features that you and your team believe are necessarily to accomplish your practice's goals.
- Categorize, if possible, the features as "must-have" and "nice-to-have," so that it's easier to effectively shortlist vendors.
- Check your list of features during product demos to understand how each system will suit your workflow.

The right EHR system is one that offers all the essential features and meets all the specific requirements of your independent practice.

Read our article, [Essential Medical Software Features for Your Small Practice](#), to understand the various essential features you should look for when evaluating medical software systems for your small practice.

# Check the Vendor's Customer Support Options

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It's not easy to get acclimated to a new EHR system. That's why you need to ensure that your shortlisted EHR vendor has an efficient and responsive customer support team.

If a vendor's customer service is difficult to reach even before you buy the EHR, you can assume that they won't be helpful when you try to contact them after implementation. Therefore, when evaluating EHRs, look for vendors that offer multiple customer support options such as:

- Online support ticket
- Email
- Phone (toll free or 24/7)
- Live chat
- Online help center
- Knowledge base

Shortlist EHR vendors that offer most of these listed support options. This is essential because in an urgent situation, you can quickly reach out to them via at least one of these options.

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## Conclusion and Next Steps

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Small and independent practices must thoroughly research an EHR system's ease-of-use, essential features and customer support to select and implement the most suitable system. Follow the advice we've listed in this guide to ensure that you choose the right EHR system so that your independent medical practice is successful.

To summarize, you can ease the EHR selection process by following these steps:

- When selecting an EHR vendor, ask for live demonstrations and free trials of the EHR system. This will help you judge the system's user friendliness.
- Identify the essential features you require in your practice and match those with the EHR system.
- Ensure that the EHR vendor you choose offers multiple customer support options such as phone, email, live chat and knowledge base.
- Check out our [EHR software buyer's guide](#) to get a better understanding of the different functionalities offered by the vendors.

By following these simple steps, you will be able to shortlist an EHR system that's best suited for your specific requirements.

## About Software Advice

Software Advice is the leading online service for businesses navigating the software selection process. Advisors provide free, personalized software recommendations, helping companies of all sizes find products that meet their business needs. Software Advice also features objective research by industry experts and reviews from validated users, saving buyers time and resources. Software Advice is a Gartner company. For more information, visit [softwareadvice.com](https://softwareadvice.com).

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