

Best Practices in EMR Use

Topic: Receiving and Sending Faxes Electronically	
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Expiry Date: Dec 31, 2008 Next Revision Date: Dec 1, 2008	Contact Person: Jane Aitkin
Applicable EMR systems: Macintosh, Unix and Windows-based EMRs.	
Applicable Settings: Family Practice, Specialty Practice	
Related documents: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reducing The Paper Burden in Medical Offices 2. Scanning Documents into the EMR 3. Communicating Confidential Documents via Secure E-mail 	

Problem Statement	The fax machine is another source of paper which inundates the practice. Documents that are received by fax are generally of poorer quality and do not scan well. How can I manage this source of paper?
Description of Solution	Receiving faxes electronically can help reduce the burden of paper and provide better quality images in your documents. Also, having an electronic fax feature can help decrease the amount paper that needs to be printed prior to faxing (e.g., referral letters, prescription renewals, etc).
Implementation	<p>There are generally two types of e-fax solutions available today:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Software that resides on your computer and accepts faxes via modem 2. Internet-based solutions which provide you with a secure manner to receive faxes. <p>Both solutions are acceptable methods to receive faxes electronically. Faxes usually arrive as tiff files which can be transferred to your EMR quite easily.</p>
Best Practice Tip	Always include a cover page on any faxes you send. Include a standard confidentiality notice on the fax. Wording for one is provided at the end of this document.

<p>Tool</p> <p>Windows and Unix</p>	<p><i>For Windows and Unix systems:</i></p> <p>ACTIVE FAX http://www.s4si.com/</p> <p>Active Fax comes installed with some Windows systems, so check your system to see if it is installed before you purchase it. Some clinics already use Active Fax to receive faxes electronically. The files need to be transferred to your EMR like any scanned document. You can also send faxes by printing to fax.</p> <p>Unfortunately, you cannot 'write' on tiff files. So if you need to sign a document such as a prescription renewal request, you will need to print it off, sign the paper document and fax it out manually.</p> <p>To make it work, you will need to connect your modem to the phone line where you receive faxes.</p> <p>Electronic signature systems do exist for the PC, but they are still somewhat cumbersome to use. Stay tuned for more information!</p>
<p>Macintosh</p>	<p><i>For Macintosh systems:</i></p> <p>http://www.smileonmymac.com/pagesender/</p> <p>PageSender can be purchased from Smile on My Mac. It allows full sending and receiving of faxes directly from the system. You use it like you would any printer. Most Macs already come with a modem installed. You will need to connect the modem to the phone line that you use as a fax machine.</p>
<p>Internet-based for all OSs</p>	<p><i>Internet-based E-Fax Solutions:</i></p> <p>There are a number of companies that provide Internet-based fax systems. They will generally provide you with a local phone number that you use as your fax number. They will e-mail you when you have received a fax and you can retrieve your faxes from a secure website. You would have to send out faxes from the service's secure website, as sending faxes via e-mail would not be secure. Some services allow you to send and receive files in an encrypted format directly into your e-mail account. You would have to encrypt and decrypt documents using a decryption software. This is generally easy to do, as most of these systems are now quite sophisticated and will do it with a simple click. There is an initial set-up effort to set up the encryption/decryption</p>

	<p>mechanism. Myfax (below) can help you set up an encryption/decryption approach using PGP, a well-recognized software for this purpose; PGP stands for 'pretty good privacy'.</p> <p>The following are reliable services for sending and receiving faxes over the internet. The cost is constantly coming down.</p> <p>E-fax –Canadian company, largest e-fax provider</p> <p>www.efax.com</p> <p>PGI Connect.com - reasonable pricing</p> <p>http://www.premiereglobal.com/</p> <p>MyFAX - reasonable rates, Canadian</p> <p>www.myfax.com</p> <p>EASY LINK</p> <p>http://www.faxsav.com/welcome.html</p>
<p>Expected Outcomes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduction in paper coming into the office 2. Better flow of electronic documents
<p>Key measures</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of paper documents coming into the office 2. Number of paper documents being printed off for faxing.
<p>Diagram/Picture</p>	
<p>Disclaimer</p>	<p>The suggestions made in this best practice document are provided as suggestions for improving your practice and should not be construed as advice, guidance or recommendations that must be implemented. Clinical practice is complex and requires clinical judgement. Readers should evaluate the suggestions made in this document within the context of their clinical practice and guide themselves accordingly.</p>

Standard Confidentiality Notice. Select one of the two options below. You can adapt either one to your personal preferences.

This document is directed in confidence solely to the person or entity named above and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. This information may not otherwise be distributed, copied or disclosed. If you have received this facsimile in error, please notify the sender immediately via the above facsimile number and destroy the original message. Thank you for your cooperation.

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P.S. Privilege is a legal term meaning 'protected under law for the exclusive use of a party'. This might apply to situations where insurance letters or other legal documents are being exchanged.