

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is Epic?

A. Epic is the electronic health record (EHR) system we are implementing at UMass Memorial Health Care (UMMHC) to replace most of our current clinical and patient business service-related applications. When the system goes live on October 1, 2017, UMMHC patients will have one electronic health record that contains their complete information such as medical history, health insurance, current medications, allergies and much more.

Q. Why are we installing a new electronic health record?

A. The goal of Epic is to have a truly integrated clinical and financial information system that improves the quality and safety of patient care and an enhanced patient experience, as well as efficiency and communication among caregivers across the care continuum. The implementation of Epic supports UMMHC's vision to provide seamless health care delivery, education and research, and exceptional value to patients; helping us become the best place to give and get care.

Q. When and where will Epic be implemented?

A. On October 1, 2017, Epic will go live at UMass Memorial Medical Center, UMass Memorial Medical Group, UMass Memorial - Clinton Hospital, UMass Memorial - Marlborough Hospital and UMass Memorial - HealthAlliance Hospital, as well as the UMass Memorial Accountable Care Organization and UMass Medical School. A specific go-live date for UMass Memorial - Community Healthlink has yet to be determined.

Q. Who will use Epic?

A. Nearly every UMMHC physician and employee will be impacted by Epic. Anyone involved with a patient's care experience—clinical or financial—will use Epic.

Q. What are some of the potential benefits of Epic?

A. Epic will offer many benefits to patients, providers and employees. Some of these benefits include:

- A more complete patient medical history at caregivers' fingertips, along with timely access to test results
- One-time collection of a patient's financial and clinical information, which will eliminate the need for patients to provide, and employees to collect, the information multiple times
- Improved patient care through use of medical best practices
- Streamlined care processes, such as appointment scheduling from the hospital to the clinic
- More efficient and streamlined billing and collection processes
- Improved patient safety through system features, such as drug interaction alerts
- Access to comprehensive patient care data

Q. What type of historical data will be available in Epic from our current system(s)?

A. Some historical data will be available in Epic. However, the type and amount of available data has yet to be determined.

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Q. Will Epic slow me down?

A. As with anything new, there will be a learning curve with Epic. Initially, it may take you a bit longer to do your work. Even in the longer term, some processes may take longer using Epic; however, others will be much quicker. Overall, using Epic will be more efficient than our current processes.

Q. How will Epic benefit me?

A. You will find there are many ways in which the new EHR will benefit you—improved processes, workflows and communication, as well as greater access to information that’s critical to what you do every day. However, these benefits will come after a lot of hard work and training. Epic is first and foremost about our patients and providing them with the highest quality, safest care through an integrated EHR system. Epic will provide us with one patient, one record no matter where they receive their care within UMMHC.

Q. How will the implementation of Epic affect my job?

A. The EHR will change workflows and processes throughout the organization. There will be change ahead, including new opportunities.

Q. Will we continue to use paper?

A. Epic will enable us to become a paper-light organization. We will evaluate the paper forms we have traditionally used and determine how the information can be best integrated into Epic.

Q. What if I don’t know how to use a computer very well?

A. If you are not yet computer savvy, you’re not alone. Computer skills vary from person to person across the organization. Our training will address any concerns you have about basic computer skills. You will also be provided training on Epic and related workflows before we go live with Epic so that you are comfortable using the new system.

Q. When and where will training be conducted?

A. The goal is to provide “just-in-time” training. End-user training will begin approximately two months prior to our October 1 go-live. Training will likely consist of e-learning courses, in-classroom instruction, and practice labs. Training locations and requirements will be communicated as we get closer to our go-live date.

Q. Do I have to go through training to use the system?

A. Yes, training will be mandatory for everyone who will use Epic.

Q. How much training time is required?

A. Training is role-based, and therefore the amount of training required varies by role. More specific details regarding training will be shared well in advance.

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Q. How is training compensated?

A. Training time for UMMHC employees is paid work time. Instructions for how to account for your training time will be communicated closer to the start of training.

Q. How can I practice what I have learned during training?

A. There will be numerous ways you can practice your new Epic skills. Prior to training, e-Learning modules will be available. After you complete your training, you will be able to access what is called the “Playground” training environment. Specific details about accessing the Epic Practice Playground will be provided during your training.

Q. What happens if there is a power outage or the system crashes?

A. Back-up generator capabilities will be in place in the event of a power outage. However, duplicate servers are being built to minimize unscheduled downtime. The goal is to keep the system up and operational.

As with other computer software, Epic will require scheduled downtime for system maintenance and upgrades; however, these are typically scheduled in the early hours and/or on weekends. As with all current systems, we will have downtime procedures in place and communicate that information to end users.

Q. What steps do we take to safeguard patient information?

A. To ensure the utmost patient privacy, Epic will be designed to allow you access to only the information you need to do your specific job. Regular monitoring and auditing of records is done to ensure that only authorized personnel are accessing patient information. Breach of patient privacy is subject to disciplinary action.