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Optimizing your EHR investments — The next leap forward

Unlocking the value of data you already have, says Jerry Hodge, senior vice president of military & veteran health solutions at Leidos Health, can improve care and reduce costs throughout the enterprise.

By [J Hodge](#) | February 24, 2018 | 02:21 PM



What does Leidos mean by "optimizing EHR investments"?

It's about leveraging your good technology investments to realize great results. It's finding better ways to manage your cash flow and refocusing your business perspective on care delivery to improve the quality of care, outcome of care and cost of care, with the catalyzed adoption and deployment of EHR systems across the spectrum of healthcare enterprises, providers now have huge databases of important, patient-specific information that they can use to optimize care. If transitioning from paper to electronic was the first step in EHR development, selecting the appropriate tools and solutions to enhance that initial investment follows suit.

But beyond technology, optimization should encompass a broader approach, striving to make an organization's people, process, and technology as effective and efficient as possible. Ultimately, that creates clinical value and improves patient care.

What's driving organizations to prioritize optimization programs?

First, moving beyond the era of meaningful use. For years, healthcare systems were under an enormous burden — driven by the federal stimulus and regulatory efforts — to invest and implement large-scale EHR solutions. With nearly 85 percent of the market having largely implemented their core EHR solution, the next logical step is to examine post-live EHR optimization. Many organizations have not seen the results in improved efficiency or reduced cost of care that an integrated EHR can offer. Optimization initiatives can help them realize the best ROI possible.

Second, the goal of interoperability. As alternative payment models and population health requirements become part of the equation, think systems integration can yield analytics to drive clinical, financial and operational decision-making. The Leidos team continues to incorporate market trends such as population health into its toolkit of content and workflows for system deployment and optimization.

Why should a health system look to a platform-independent provider to implement or optimize its EHR?

Our value in the marketplace is defined by our ability to be objective in solution selection and having a deep bench of experts knowledgeable in all current and competing systems as well as our clinical and business operations knowledge. When we work with our clients, either in commercial or federal health systems, our role is to be an independent, unbiased advisor. We scan the marketplace for solutions, study the client's unique requirements, and then recommend a choice that aligns best with its needs. Our ability to stay objective comes from the detachment of not having built the EHR. Within every EHR there are multiple ways to complete the work in the system. The expertise of our staff provides us with the opportunity to advise on the system design that will best meet the needs of that organization.

Is there crossover between your deep federal experience and the commercial healthcare sector?

Absolutely. Leidos is a leader in providing technology-based solutions to complex problems, with nearly 30 years of experience with Department of Defense EHR solutions. Recently, commercial enterprises have recognized our work with the DoD and other federal agencies. There is an understanding that our expertise in delivering flexible solutions that support optimal care for federal customers can be translated to the commercial sector. When healthcare providers need to add new capability to their system — say revenue cycle or population health analytics — they contact us based on the efficacy of those federal implementation projects. It's a very similar process in both markets. Whether in a commercial or federal setting, our value is our ability to remain objective and to be knowledgeable of the organization's mission and objectives.

EHR implementations are notoriously difficult. How has Leidos managed to be so successful in this area?

First, it's the experience that comes from being a Top-10 healthcare IT provider and the largest federal systems integrator in the country. We've seen it all. Second, across all of our service delivery models, we focus on selecting the appropriate pre-go-live team that can both relate to the processes and workflows taking place and determine how to best translate them across the continuum of care to our clients.

One of the most challenging steps in any enterprise deployment — whether it's an EHR or CRM system — is change management. We have to consider an element of human nature in these deployments. "Whether I hate or love the current system, at least I know it. The new system? I don't know it." Our job is to help clients move up the learning curve and beyond frustration as quickly as possible. This involves coaching and information sharing, and setting expectations, as well as helping providers understand how they will perform their job using this new capability and walking them through those steps.



Beyond technology, optimization should encompass a broader approach, striving to make an organization's people, process, and technology as effective and efficient as possible.

— JERRY HODGE, LEIDOS

About Leidos

Leidos is a Fortune 500® science and technology solutions and services leader working to solve the world's toughest challenges in the defense, intelligence, homeland security, civil, and health markets. The company's 32,000 employees support vital missions for government and commercial customers. Headquartered in Reston, Virginia, Leidos reported annual revenues of approximately \$7.06 billion for the fiscal year ended December 30, 2016. For more information, visit www.leidos.com

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