**COMMUNICATION PLAN**

The following gives you a guide by which to think through a communications plan to help inform the clinic admin and clinical staff the aspects of the change. An organization is much more likely to accept change when it is informed about and involved with the change.

**Introduction**

Develop a brief paragraph describing the EMR implementation project and include the estimated time period for the project, including the target go-live date. You may also want to include the goals that were defined for the project.

**Create the plan under the following headings**

**Key Messages** – Key messages are the heart of the communications. They are generally focused on responding to the following questions:

* “What’s happening and to whom?” – what is changing for whom and what is not changing;
* “Why?” – why is it changing;
* “When?” – when will the change occur, is everyone changing at the same time and if not, when will others change, and when will information be forthcoming regarding the change; and
* “What’s in it for me?” – what does this mean to me, what can I now do that I couldn’t do before, what are the benefits for me.
* “How will I be prepared to make the change?”

Examples of key messages related to EMR projects may include statements such as:

* The EMR will help us improve the quality of patient care.
* The EMR will help you by making it easier and more efficient to schedule appointments.
* Changing to a new way of working takes time.
* The EMR will improve communications within our clinic, which will ultimately increase our efficiencies.
* More and more of the health-care sector are moving to electronic records for many reasons. Ones that relate to our clinic include improved access to information, improved quality of patient care and safety and gains in efficiency.

**Contentious Issues Expected** – Document the anticipated issues or hot points that may arise during the EMR implementation project. Perhaps you expect resistance from specific staff members? Also document any response strategies you may be able to employ to address the issue and reduce the point of contention.

**Stakeholder/Audience** – Document to whom the communications will be targeted. Rather than naming individual people, it is often best to describe the “who” in terms of their role within the practice. For example, physicians, medical office assistants, clinic manager, etc.

**Purpose** – Describe what needs to be achieved via this communication. This information will help the resource(s) responsible for developing the communication content to ensure that the content is appropriately focused to achieve these objectives. Example purposes include to elicit feedback, to inform or advise, to educate or to seek approval.

**Message** – Identify the key messages that must be communicated to the target audience(s).

**Method** – Indicate the method (e.g., email, presentation, face to face, newsletter, Intranet site, status reports, etc.) to be used to deliver this communication. Remember that critical information should be delivered in such a way to ensure that the target audience got the message. For example, a critical message may be better delivered via a face-to-face meeting rather than in an email.

**Timing & Frequency** – Indicatethe recommended timing (e.g., one week before go live, on go-live day, 3 days after go live, etc.) for the communication. Note that it is recommended that actual dates not be referenced as the date may change in the project schedule. If the communication should be repeated, state the required frequency. Do not forget to plan for ongoing communications required post-implementation.

**Responsibility** – You may wish to consider responsibility from two perspectives – 1) Indicate the name of the resource(s) who are responsible for developing the communications content (e.g., writing the email, drafting the presentation slides, etc.) for this event; 2) Indicate the name of the resource(s) who are responsible for delivering the communication (e.g., sending the email, making the presentation, etc.). You will want someone with a unique relationship with the target stakeholders (e.g., supervisor, or lead resource within a team) to deliver your message on your behalf.