When all patient information is in one place, physicians can make well-informed treatment decisions quickly and safely:

- 97% reported that EHRs contributed to timely access to medical records and 82% reported that EHRs positively affected the quality of clinical decisions.2
- 80% reported that EHRs averted a known drug allergic reaction, and 71% avoided a potentially dangerous drug interaction.2
- By increasing adherence to guideline- or protocol-based care, delivery improvements ranged from absolute increases of 5 to 66 percentage points, with most clustering in the range of 12 to 20 percentage points.3

One in seven hospitalizations results from missing clinical information.4 Ready access to a comprehensive patient record allows the physician to effectively coordinate care and communicate with patients. Physicians using fully functional EHRs have reported the following benefits:

- Six months after EHR implementation, 72.4% reported being in agreement on treatment goals and plans with other involved clinicians, compared to 56% of clinicians without EHRs.5
- 72% reported that EHRs positively affected communication with patients.2
- Gradual EHR implementation resulted in maintaining positive patient-physician relationships and fostering the sharing of medical information.6
- HealthPOINT is the federally-designated health information technology (HIT) resource and support center for all South Dakota healthcare providers. We specialize in assisting healthcare providers in analyzing their practice readiness and opportunities to achieve tangible results from the implementation and effective utilization of electronic health records (EHRs).
Why EHRs Now?

Though the initial costs and implementation challenges are considerable, delaying implementation today may create additional resource drains tomorrow. The availability of an EHR may soon be a “minimum standard” for new physicians, public and private payers and patients.

- The 2009 Future Physicians of America survey found that 90% of medical students consider it important or very important to have an EHR where they choose to practice.7
- EHRs are an essential component of reform related efforts such as the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH).
- Practices that do not meet meaningful use criteria will face Medicare penalties in 2015.
- A certified, operating EHR will be essential to participation in both the public and private pay for performance programs expected in the future.
- 42% of consumers are interested in establishing an online connection to their physician through a personal health record and 55% of consumers want the ability to communicate online with physicians.8
- HealthPOINT was established explicitly to assist health care providers in South Dakota modernize their practices with certified EHRs.

Potential for Long-Term Savings

While EHRs do require upfront investment for the technology and training, a fully functional, EHR system can lead to long-term savings in a variety of areas. Although the evidence is anecdotal at this point, physicians report:

- Time savings from reduced chart chasing, chart storage, transcribing, and phone conversations with labs or pharmacies
- Improved accuracy in coding and a decreased reporting burden.

“The sooner physicians start using an EHR, the sooner they and their patients will realize its benefits – the ability to share patient data with colleagues and patients, the ability to retrieve old data effortlessly, the ability to access patient records remotely, so they answer patient questions intelligently from home, or even from a medical meeting.”

- David Blumenthal, M.D., M.P.P., National Coordinator for Health IT

Help Is Available!

- The federal government is committing unprecedented resources to support the adoption and use of certified EHRs. Between the strong national push for certified EHR adoption and the CMS incentive payments, there has never been a better time to take action:
  - Eligible professionals can receive as much as $44,000 over a five-year period through Medicare.
  - For Medicaid, eligible professionals can receive as much as $63,750 over six years.
  - For more information, visit http://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/

But resources for implementation assistance are limited. As providers rush to take advantage of time-limited incentives, vendor capacity will likely become strained and some may overbook. HealthPOINT, South Dakota’s Regional Extension Center, provides a trusted resource and advisor dedicated to helping all providers understand and take full advantage of this window of opportunity to realize the benefits of health IT.

- Contact HealthPOINT when you need:
  - EHR Specialists
  - Comprehensive Analysis
  - Tangible Results
  - Ongoing commitment