

Fully Hosted Systems by Evolution Billing & Technology
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Better Operational Efficiencies with Electronic Patient Care Reporting

All organizations that provide emergency medical services can use electronic patient care reporting to eliminate inefficient paper processes, increase manpower efficiency, meet HIPAA requirements, speed up the reporting process, and increase billing collection rates.

The inefficient paper patient care report

Paper patient care reports cost organizations much more than just the cost of the form. The documentation process, from first mark to filing, is riddled with inefficiencies. There are many areas where the traditional process of documentation costs organizations much more than first expected.

Let's face it. Reading other people's handwriting is never an infallible process. Try reading the handwriting of someone that just saved a person's life in the middle of the night and is now trying to scribble out what he or she did at 3 a.m. under extreme circumstances. The legibility of this documentation quickly becomes a concern. Deciphering patient demographics, billing information, vitals, procedures, and medications would require someone skilled in the art of decoding hieroglyphics.

Pre-hospital care documentation provides important information for organizations. This data can help improve patient care, allow for service reimbursements, and reduce exposure to litigation. When the data collected is inaccurate or incomplete, there can be serious ramifications.

Many agencies have personnel that are solely responsible for filing and cataloging completed documentation. Quite often, off site storage is leased and reports are stored for upwards of seven years. The time it takes to maintain the filing system and the real-estate to store the files can cost agencies quite a bit of money. Additionally, the paper-filing system leads to a number of HIPAA concerns if proper procedures are not in place to control access to the files.

One of the huge benefits any organization can realize from accurate documentation is being able to process the data that has been collected. This data can provide agencies with performance metrics, information about quality of care, data that can help justify grants or funding, and in many cases it can provide a competitive edge to help them expand their organization. However, if this data is not readily available, the process of transcribing the data from the paper reports can be time consuming and often results in unreliable and inaccurate data. Additionally, the billing department needs access to this data typically in a different format. This results in redundant efforts in data conversion.

These inefficiencies can be eliminated with the implementation of an electronic patient care reporting system. And many benefits can be realized once an ePCR system is in place at your organization.



What's so great about electronic patient care reporting?

Eliminating paper processes can result in a number of benefits. These benefits can help your organization reduce operational costs, predict future trends, and most importantly have the data that provides you with key performance indicators that help you run a more efficient operation.

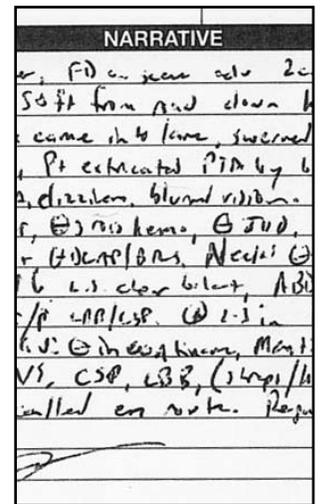
Regardless of whether or not you have a billing department or use a billing service, the efficiencies gained by using ePCRs can greatly help in this process as well. Many agencies have reported that they lost revenue due to incomplete, inaccurate, or misplaced patient care reports. A successful implementation of an ePCR solution can lead to better accuracy in documentation, timelier submittal of PCRs and quicker turnaround in the billing process. It is not uncommon for an organization to be able to provide same-day billing for their services. Speeding up the billing cycle can help with cash flow and collections. The number of rejected claims can be reduced by ensuring that the appropriate information has been collected on the PCR. Additionally, many billing services offer reduced rates when they are able to get the data submitted to them electronically.

The electronic data gathered can provide organizations with crucial metrics to help run a more efficient business, and provide necessary controls to improve the quality of care offered. The quality assurance process can be streamlined once data is put in place. The ability to pull reports that show how well your crews are able to perform certain procedures will provide the metrics that help determine what training is required. Additionally, this gives your organization proof that they are running optimally and can provide competitive advantages.

This data also simplifies the reporting processes that may be required by your county or state regulatory agencies. The process of submitting data to these organizations can be invisible to your operations. When the data is collected through the course of day-to-day operations and automatically submitted, you can reduce the amount of time taken to make sure the state/county has the information they require.

The reduction of paper saves more than just trees. Being able to reduce the time and resources dedicated to filing and storing historical data will provide your operation with a more efficient process over time. With an ePCR solution all the documentation can be stored electronically and pulled out of the database in its original format with a click of the mouse. Additionally, the HIPAA procedures are automated in that all access to this data can be controlled and logged to ensure that necessary patient privacy procedures are followed. Also, many ePCR solutions allow the ability to attach other documents such as images and ECGs, and signatures to be attached to the permanent record providing more complete documentation of the services rendered.

These efficiencies and more should be expected from any ePCR solution that you choose to employ. The cost savings, the time savings, and the data collected will help your organization run more efficiently.



Actual size sample
from PCR narrative

Paper patient care reports result in inefficient operations and inaccurate data entry can cause major problems with compliance.

What should you look for in an electronic patient care reporting solution?

When choosing an ePCR solution, there are a number of criteria you should use to ensure the system will be able to run optimally within your organization.

- **Ease of customization**

Nothing can be more frustrating than buying a software package and realizing that any changes to the system require custom development or a timely process that can either cost money or delay the implementation of the system. Because of this, it is important to choose a solution that provides you with the ability to configure and customize the system to meet the requirements of your organization, work within your established protocols, and provide a solution that is "out-of-the-box". Custom solutions, while sometimes necessary, should be avoided to help "future-proof" your system in order to receive and implement timely updates from the software vendor.



- **Ease of use**

The best solutions will fail if adoption by the people using it takes months of training and realignment of key personnel. A good solution should be easy to use by your crews. Many of your personnel will be somewhat reluctant to abandon pen and paper and move to a computerized solution. Because of this, it is absolutely necessary that the system is intuitive and can be used with minimal training. This will reduce the amount of time to train existing and new employees, and should result in a quick implementation of the ePCR system.

- **True integration**

Many organizations interface a series of "best of breed" information systems to run their organizations. This approach of grouping disparate software together can deliver somewhat reasonable results. True integration is the most efficient method for software functions to work together. This approach usually costs the software developer more to create but saves the end user on ongoing cost of maintaining interfaces. With true integration, software components are designed from the ground up to run in concert with each other.

- **Integration to medical devices**

A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. If one of the goals of an ePCR solution is to run more efficiently, it should be expected that the data from your medical devices be able to integrate with your ePCR solution. This includes being able to electronically attach ECGs from your defibrillators, bring in the key data from your monitors into the patient care report (such as vitals and events) and store those permanently within the ePCR.

- **Flexible Routing**

When you go paperless, it becomes important to be able to route the electronic PCR to various groups within the organization for review, QA/QI, and possibly completion. A good ePCR solution will allow you to do this electronically instead of printing copies of the PCR to be distributed to various disciplines in your organization.

- **Flexible reporting**

Many facilities will require a paper copy of the run report. Over time, this may be eliminated when hospitals and other healthcare facilities begin to adopt better electronic means of getting the data, but today you must be able to provide your facilities with the data they need. A good ePCR solution will not only allow printing of the PCR in the field, but should allow the ability to automatically fax or email this data to any healthcare facility.

- **National and state reporting requirements**

In an effort to standardize the collection of EMS data, the National EMS Information System (NEMSIS) developed a database for storing national EMS data. Many states have additional reporting requirements. You will want an ePCR that meets NEMSIS reporting requirements as well as any specialized reporting requirements your state may have in place.

State-of-the-art electronic field data collection

RescueNet ePCR offers an ePCR solution that can meet the needs of your organization today and in the future. RescueNet ePCR is the latest reincarnation of an ePCR solution that has been in the industry for over 10 years. The original incarnation started in the days of DOS-based mobile terminals and was sold by a company called Westech. Over the years this system evolved into a product called EMS Pro. Due to the vision provided by ZOLL Medical Corporation, the acquisition of this technology and the visionaries that created it helped push this ePCR solution to the next level. RescueNet ePCR and its predecessors have been sold to over 400 fire and EMS organizations representing one of the largest installed-bases of an ePCR solution.

RescueNet ePCR offers a number of benefits to organizations that adopt this ePCR solution:

- **Windows-based**

RescueNet ePCR supports laptops, tablets, and desktop computing systems providing flexible input and display options. Our typical installations are on ruggedized tablets provided by a number of manufacturers. These solutions offer durable options for our customers and work well with RescueNet ePCR.



RescueNet ePCR is the first field data solution that combines proven, reliable technology with the most easy-to-use interface in the industry. It brings the latest ideas and technology in usability to the electronic field data experience.

- **Integration with Defibrillators**

RescueNet ePCR offers complete integration with the ZOLL M Series, E Series, AED Pro, as well as the LifePak 12 and LP500 from Physio. This integration provides the ability to automatically input vitals and events into the PCR directly from the monitor. Additionally, this offers customers the ability to electronically store ECGs with the ePCR.

- **NEMESIS Gold Certified**

RescueNet ePCR 5.1 is NEMESIS Gold Certified which means that it meets the highest level of national reporting requirements. RescueNet ePCR also provides several exports to meet individual state reporting requirements.

- **Customizable**

RescueNet ePCR is one of the only solutions that offers extreme flexibility via customization to our customers. Customers have the ability to change labels on buttons, customize lists, add fields, and configure screens. This customization allows our customers to implement a solution that is easily adopted by their crews. Additionally, it is available “out-of-the-box” reducing hidden fees and charges related to customizing the application.

- **Reliability**

As with any software, the longevity of a solution typically leads to stability and reliability. With over 15 years of experience with ePCR solutions, RescueNet ePCR offers a solution that meets the needs and requirements of fire and EMS organizations. And with a solid, financially-stable parent company like ZOLL Medical Corporation, you can be sure that new releases with innovative features and functions will be introduced each year for upgrades, and that a dependable technical support team of experts will be at your service 24/7.

User interface designed for experts, by experts

A poorly designed user interface can result in long learning curves for the users, inaccurate data being collected, and many frustrations. Because of this, ZOLL Data Systems focused on providing a world-class user interface in RescueNet ePCR. This interface was designed with a few criteria in mind:

- The ability to use it with little or no training
- The ability to customize it easily in order to meet requirements of our customers

To accomplish this, we brought in experts to assist in the design of the system. The following mechanisms were used in designing RescueNet ePCR’s user interface:

- **Usability labs**

These provided ZOLL Data Systems with the ability to observe users on the system in order to understand what areas needed to be simplified, and which operations were tedious for users. Users with no training were brought in and asked to document various scenarios. The results from these lab tests led to many changes in our initial design to optimize the experience for our customers.

- Designed for touch-screen (stylus or finger) and keyboard input**
 We realize that everyone's choice of hardware will vary. There will be customers that like stylus (pen) based systems, others that prefer touch-screens, and those that will only use the system on a desktop or a laptop. Because of this, we designed an interface that can be used optimally on any of these platforms.
- Any screen accessible within two taps/clicks**
 It can be frustrating to be buried in an application and not remember how you got there or from whence you came. We designed the user interface with the goal of being able to access any screen within two clicks. This provides a system that is both logical and intuitive.
- Pick-Lists, buttons labels, and other elements can be easily customized to meet the needs of your organization**
 Customization is key. We realize this and designed the system accordingly. In addition to this, we realize that reducing the amount of typing or writing will increase the accuracy of documentation. Most fields in the system can be completed by selecting an item from a list. This greatly speeds the time the documentation takes, and reduces errors in data entry.
- Intuitive design requires little training for medics and EMTs**
 With everything above, the end result is a system that is easily adopted by your personnel. The results are quickly tangible, and once the system is configured, the process of going live is a breeze.

Integration with other business processes brings even more benefits

RescueNet ePCR is a member of the RescueNet family. What does this mean? In short, ZOLL Data Systems understands the needs of fire and EMS organizations. We have offerings that cover every aspect of the operation. From the second the call comes in, we have solutions that drive the success of your organization.

For EMS

RescueNet Dispatch
 RescueNet ePCR
 RescueNet Resource Planner

RescueNet Crew Scheduler
 RescueNet Billing
 RescueNet Nomad

For Fire Rescue

RescueNet CommCAD
 RescueNet ePCR
 RescueNet Billing

RescueNet FireRMS
 RescueNet FireRMS Mobile
 RescueNet Navigator

About ZOLL Data Systems

ZOLL Data Systems of Broomfield, Colorado, develops, markets, and sells the RescueNet suite-computer-aided dispatch, billing, fire records management, field data collection, and mobile data software for the fire and emergency medical services (EMS) market. RescueNet is the only fully integrated information management system that allows fire and EMS organizations to manage critical information for maximum performance.

For more information, visit www.zolldata.com or call 800.474.4489.