

Top 5 reasons to speech-enable clinical documentation.

How speech recognition helps improve clinician satisfaction, EHR adoption, data quality and financial performance.

Why speech-enabled clinical documentation makes sense in acute and ambulatory healthcare environments

A variety of factors are putting pressure on acute and ambulatory healthcare organizations to improve clinical documentation, from regulatory, economic and legal concerns, to patient safety and satisfaction standards.

The heart of the matter is how to make it easier for clinicians to meet clinical documentation standards, while continuing to provide exceptional care to patients. Automated speech capture solutions that work with (or complement) other technologies such as the electronic health record (EHR) are a key part of making that a reality.

EHRs are now a fundamental requirement in the new healthcare landscape, but research indicates that most organizations and practitioners still struggle with EHR technologies.¹ Getting doctors and other medical professionals to adopt and become proficient in EHR-related technologies is essential to fulfilling the potential of clinical documentation improvement (CDI) and in so doing, reaping the benefits of improved patient outcomes, greater financial results, compliance consistency and improved patient satisfaction.

Speech technology is fast becoming a highly leveraged tool in the quest for EHR adoption and CDI programs. In fact, it will be the fastest-growing method used for clinical documentation between now and 2016, according to an important new study from Health Business Group.²

Huge strides have been made in the quality, accuracy, performance, affordability and “time-to-value” of speech technology solutions, and their use in healthcare is on a dramatic upswing. Why does speech-enabled clinical documentation make sense in acute and ambulatory healthcare environments? Here are five important reasons:

- 1. Improved clinician satisfaction.** Clinicians want to spend as much time as possible with their patients—not wasting time on input processes based on EHR templates. When they can use speech as the input mechanism at both the beginning (during a patient interview) and the end (adding comments, diagnoses and action plans), essential information is captured and input as part of the clinician’s normal workflow. It also speeds clinician’s EHR usage by allowing them speak versus “click and type.” In addition, today’s speech technology supports mobile devices, which have become an indispensable part of clinicians’ workflow, allowing them to “dictate on the go” as part of a streamlined clinical documentation process. Ultimately, speech recognition is most important because it allows the clinician to narrate in much greater detail about the patient, unlike rigid EHR templates that leave little room for descriptive text. In the end, this benefits the patient by providing more complete documentation that improves treatment and results.

¹ “Navigating Today’s CDI Landscape: 10 Strategies for Success,” Healthcare Financial Management Association, January 2014.

² “Clinical Documentation Trends in the U.S., 2013-2016,” Health Business Group, October 2013.

2. **Increased clinician adoption of EHRs and improved compliance.** Doctors, hospitals and all applicable healthcare organizations are well aware of the incentives—and penalties—associated with the Meaningful Use provision in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). So, ensuring not only deployment but also acceptable usage levels of EHRs is a high priority. Speech input is already helping to boost Meaningful Use compliance by practitioners because it allows them to use their familiar and preferred input methodology—voice—and avoid cumbersome and uncomfortable typing into EHR fields.
3. **Improved volume and quality of data.** Healthcare has become one of the biggest generators of unstructured—and structured (discrete)—data among all industries. Speech-enabled documentation using normal, natural language, allows for the capture of far more data than is the case through written input or typing. This gives healthcare organizations a richer array of data for deep analytics—including big data—for everything from improved patient outcomes to more accurate record-keeping and improved reimbursement processes. After all, accurate and complete data is the key to successful coding, compliance, CDI and quality programs. Speech technologies capture the physician narrative necessary to document care in the EHR, anywhere, at any time, and on any device.
4. **Significant cost reductions.** As more structured and unstructured data is required, input, analyzed and managed, costs can escalate to unprecedented levels. But speech-enabled clinical documentation saves money for all parties by dramatically reducing the time for data input and documentation. Finally, voice-enabled clinical documentation significantly increases clinician productivity. For instance, speech tools give clinicians the ability to dictate directly into EHRs and edit and sign their input, capturing the information quickly and accurately and in a context-aware manner. Other care providers can access the information because it is immediately available in the EHR.
5. **Greater accuracy.** Speech-enabled clinical documentation is a key facilitator in achieving arguably the most important goal of EHRs—being able to improve documentation accuracy to avoid the possibility of life-threatening errors. This potentially dramatic improvement in data input quality not only helps to ensure better patient outcomes, but it also facilitates clinicians' readiness for audits under ACA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and other healthcare compliance initiatives. Speech input also provides the flexibility to use front- or back-end data capture—or both. The clinician can dictate and send information to an medical transcriptionist, or dictate directly into the EHR. Either way, the data input will be secure and reliable.

Key features and benefits of a speech-enabled documentation solution

Healthcare providers are looking for significant operational improvements related to clinical documentation, including improved efficiencies, lower documentation costs, secure patient information, increased reimbursements and the ability to spend more time with patients. To do that, more and more clinicians have sought new speech-enabled solutions delivering such functions as:

- **Navigate and dictate directly into the EHR.** Allowing clinicians to capture information in the EHR via voice increases clinician satisfaction and productivity, and improves data input accuracy. Providing a way for clinicians

to include present history illness, system reviews and assessments/plans also reduces documentation time, helps demonstrate Meaningful Use and facilitates compliance.

- **Flexible dictation options.** Regardless of whether clinicians prefer to dictate directly into the EHR, use traditional medical transcription or choose a hybrid approach, look for a solution that can support all methods, especially in larger, multi-clinician practices or hospitals.
- **Multiple input devices.** Speech-enabled solutions should offer support for a variety of voice input devices, from standard telephone lines and traditional dictation systems to smartphones and tablets. Different clinicians each have their own unique preferences for dictation and voice input, so you'll want to choose a system that can support a multitude of approaches.
- **Integrate with multiple EHRs.** Your speech recognition solution needs to seamlessly integrate with whatever EHR the organization uses—even if it's using more than one EHR. This is especially important for integrated delivery networks, and because of the rise in mergers and acquisitions.
- **Expert customer service and user training.** Since a key goal is to enhance clinicians' productivity and make it easier for them to spend more time with their patients, be sure to work with a technology partner that will address service issues quickly and expertly. You'll also want high-quality training that brings users up to speed quickly and as easily as possible.
- **Professional services.** Training, workflow enhancement, planning, solution optimization and other services ensure that healthcare organizations get the most from their investment in speech technology. Comprehensive best practices will result in successful implementation and faster turnaround time, increased clinician adoption, more complete and accurate documentation, and significant time savings for your clinicians.

Remember: As important as speech recognition is to clinical documentation improvements, what really increases productivity, drives economic value and enhances the physician's and patient's experience is actually speech understanding. After all, if the input is riddled with errors or doesn't integrate properly with your EHR, the solution won't meet your needs.

To learn more about solutions for speech-enabled clinical documentation, visit www.nuance.com/go/clindocspeech or call (877) 805-5902.

Nuance's speech solutions have helped numerous clinicians and healthcare organizations improve their clinical documentation. A proven supplier of software and services that help the healthcare industry improve operations, Nuance helps healthcare organizations enhance financial performance and increase clinician satisfaction through such technologies as speech and natural language understanding.

Nuance is the market leader in creating clinical understanding solutions that drive smart, efficient decisions across healthcare. More than 500,000 clinicians and 10,000 healthcare facilities worldwide leverage Nuance's award-winning, voice-enabled clinical documentation and analytics solutions to support the physician in any clinical workflow and on any device.

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