

# ABQ Health Partners Electronic Health Records (EHR)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABQ Health Partners has been working towards a “paperless” environment. We have been implementing Electronic Health Records (EHR) in phases since 2008, and our biggest phase yet will last from August 2011 to May 2012. EHR will help us improve the delivery of care to our patients. Your patience and understanding are greatly appreciated as we work to improve our services.

### What is an electronic health record?

Your medical record has gone from a paper chart to an electronic chart. Your physician is now able to view your entire medical history via a computer system called an electronic health record (EHR). The electronic health record is organized in a way that permits your medical provider and staff to easily see various aspects of your medical history, collect new information, evaluate and document your care, and organize your care plans in one record that is always available while also being secure and private.

This technology simplifies the process of patient care and is a benefit to both providers and patients alike. The next phase will teach ABQ Health Partners’ doctors and staff new EHR habits and processes, so they no longer need to rely on a paper trail to provide comprehensive health care.

### What are the benefits of the EHR for the medical practice?

The benefits of the EHR are significant by allowing all ABQ Health Partners providers and staff to share your EHR information in one location, no matter which clinic enters your information or electronically receives it from other systems, such as a laboratory or x-ray reports. An ABQ Health Partner provider can access all of your medical, surgical and clinical information at the push of a button.

### What are the benefits of the EHR for the patient?

The major benefit of the EHR for patients is the access our ABQ Health Partners’ providers will have in understanding various aspects of your medical care. We will no longer work in the dark because a paper report isn’t available or filed incorrectly. EHR gives your provider access to your files when out of the office, so records are immediately available when they’re needed. Patient records are immediately accessible so the doctor can provide care with the most current information at the time it’s needed.

### Is the Electronic Health Record secure?

Yes. An electronic health record is more secure than an ordinary paper chart. The system is HIPAA compliant and requires password and log-in for each user. There are multiple layers of security - not everyone can access all aspects of a patient’s record. This differs from a paper chart that anyone can pick up at anytime. Audit trails are utilized to track which charts are viewed by whom, what part of the record is accessed, and who signed each note or order. Automatic log-offs ensure records aren’t accidentally left open for someone to breach.

### How does the electronic health record change the daily processes in the office setting?

The piles of charts, labs, and messages that sit on a desk, in a drawer or on a patient’s chart are replaced by electronic ‘tasks’ (a request to supply information or perform an action). This promotes effective, efficient and accurate communication. There is greater ease in coordinating test results, referrals and script writing. Paper charts had to be organized, shelved, and retrieved. Since that wasted effort and time is being eliminated, more time can be spent administering medical care.

### What is the future of the EHR?

In the future, our EHR will be able to talk with every hospital and other medical providers in New Mexico, and possibly in the world. Efforts are underway to have different computer EHR systems to share information in a secure and efficient manner. At ABQ Health Partners we are always seeking ways to connect our physicians and non-physician providers in ways that improve timely, high quality, cost effective care for our patients.