



Healthcare Leaders: Four things you need to know before you choose your ERP solution

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In Healthcare Technology, Focus is Shifting from Electronic Health Records (EHR) to Healthcare Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

Back in 2005, a now infamous [RAND study](#) suggested that “computerizing” medical records could save \$81 billion annually while improving quality of care. This precipitated the HITECH Act passed in 2009, which resulted in health systems spending billions on electronic health records (EHRs) and other clinical systems over the last decade plus. Today, more than [95% of general acute care hospitals](#) have adopted EHRs, but the United States still [spends more per person on health](#) than comparable countries.

For any organization, investment in one area often means less investment in others. For too long, healthcare organizations have overlooked operational systems such as supply chain, HR, finance, and others – in some cases, for decades. The potential result could be a reliance on antiquated technology that is unable to adapt to meet the needs of today's healthcare organizations.

But the tide is turning. Decreasing margins, inflationary costs, staff turnover, new competitors, and improved technology are all contributing to a newfound interest in previously forgotten systems. The shift in focus from EHR to enterprise resource planning (ERP) is under way, and in many cases, this has been expedited by the COVID pandemic.

Organizations are taking a hard look at their back-office healthcare ERP platform in light of future-proofing their organization against the various challenges ahead of them. In context of the Future of Health, Future of Work, Future of Workplace and Future of Workforce, their ERP decision (a once in a generation investment) is as critical as their EHR. As such, this decision deserves C-Suite attention and alignment at healthcare organizations. The future of work is human-oriented, mobile, and radically interoperable in ways we are just beginning to appreciate.

This paper provides perspective on the top four considerations for healthcare leaders in their decision-making process, as well as an overview of one of the leading healthcare ERP platforms – Infor CloudSuite Healthcare, a multi-tenant SaaS solution hosted and secured in Amazon Web Services (AWS).

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Move to the public cloud – Secure, scalable, and flexible

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Care for your people so they can care for your patients

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Drive digital transformation enabled by radically interoperable data

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Take an enterprise view and leverage your ecosystem of partners

Consideration #1: Move to the public cloud – secure, scalable, and flexible

Legacy ERP systems are making way for cloud-based ERP platforms, removing the constraints of old, on-premises systems and allowing healthcare organizations to focus people and resources on providing quality patient care in a cost-effective manner. Cloud-based solutions or Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) are flexible, secure, and allow companies to adjust payments as they scale. We are also starting to see this trend slowly but surely materialize for the main EHR solutions.

Taking action today

Leading healthcare organizations are accelerating their move to cloud-based solutions. Cloud ERP solutions are typically designed for mobile access and can accommodate trends toward remote- and hybrid-work models by enabling secure, remote system access. They are based on modern, intuitive technology that appeals to the multiple generations within the workforce and allow organizations to simplify, standardize, and automate their back-office processes. With cloud solutions, organizations are in many ways outsourcing innovation in their operational systems to their technology partner with the expectation of ongoing updates and new capabilities. For this reason, when evaluating solutions, it is critical to understand the ERP providers' partnership models, their product roadmap, and their R&D investments in innovation. Clearly, this evaluation process is quite different from the traditional RFP/RFQ process followed for legacy solutions, which focused predominantly on current functions and features.

The Infor difference

Infor's CloudSuite Healthcare Platform is a cloud-based ERP solution developed specifically for healthcare organizations. The ERP solution is packaged with industry-specific functionality based on decades of healthcare experience, reducing the need for complex, expensive customizations and enabling speed to value with faster implementations. The platform runs on Amazon Web Services (AWS), a global cloud leader providing a secure, highly available solution lowering the overall cost of ownership. [ProMedica](#) recently expanded its partnership with Infor to move mission-critical applications to the cloud. The merger of ProMedica's provider network, a health insurance company, and skilled nursing business came with disparate technology platforms, and the move to Infor enabled ProMedica to remove workflow silos, gain efficiencies across departments, and enable scale for future growth.

"As Infor already provides services to thousands of customers on a shared infrastructure, it's in a much better position to ensure the system runs optimally, as well as provide security and disaster recovery. This frees us up to focus on what we're good at –providing patient care."

*Murry Mercier
CIO, ProMedica*

Consideration #2: Care for your people so they can care for your patients

One of the largest challenges healthcare organizations face today is workforce retention. According to the 2022 NSI National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing Report published by [NSI Nursing Solutions](#), hospital turnover rate rose 6.4% over the past year to reach 25.9% nationally. What is more, 31% of RN new hires left within their first year. With an average turnover cost of \$46,100 for each bedside nurse that resigns, the financial impact can be significant, potentially affecting hospital operations and the delivery of care.

The situation is likely to deteriorate. In a recent survey from [Incredible Health](#), more than 34% of nurses reported it is “very likely” they will quit before the year is out, with 44% citing burnout and a high-stress environment as their motivation to do so. Benefits and pay were the second most commonly reported reason (27%) for leaving. The result is a perfect storm of workforce challenges: an aging population that demands more care; an aging workforce that may soon retire; and a new generation of employees that values a work-life balance that promotes their well-being.

How we feel about our work and our employer affects our performance, productivity, and overall happiness. At the HIMSS 22 conference, President and CEO of the Society of Human Resource Management Johnny Taylor suggested that “healthcare used to be a calling... and it has become a job.” To elevate individuals and foster an environment that realizes the full potential of employees, the workplace should adapt to better support care providers and their ability to balance their personal and professional lives.

“Even in the face of storms and a technology implementation, we were able to jump in and quickly make sure our Associates received disaster or emergency pay in their accounts. That is something that would have taken days or longer prior to Infor CloudSuite Healthcare system.”

Robert Kenderdine
System Director, ERP Services
CHRISTUS Health

The Infor Difference

Infor's CloudSuite Healthcare Platform provides an end-to-end solution to manage the entire lifecycle of your workforce. It offers employees a “digital front door,” similar to that for patients, giving them a deskless experience while navigating the workplace, similar to that for patients. From schedule to paycheck, individuals can work the same way they live by using mobile devices in the flow of their work. This includes a personalized career path based on behavioral assessment technology that uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to match people to the right job, customize their learning and development based on their unique needs and abilities, and proactively identify new career paths as opportunities emerge. This solution ([Talent Science](#)) has helped organizations increase retention, drive improved performance, and increase diversity.

With today's employees demanding a better work experience, Infor's platform gives employees more control, information, and access to the resources they need to work at the top of their license. Infor's market-leading [Workforce Management \(WFM\) solution](#) for healthcare helps organizations manage the complexity of scheduling and staffing. Nurses can quickly use their mobile device to view schedules on-the-go, swap a shift, or bid on future schedules. And by linking the clinical data of each patient uniquely, Infor can schedule in a way that optimizes for patient outcomes while ensuring equitable workloads of staff.

Infor has also innovated using AI-driven automation to help improve the employee experience and productivity. [Confluence Health](#) implemented Infor Coleman Digital Assistant, which allows any staff member to get fast answers to supply inquiries. Previously, under tight time constraints, staff faced tremendous stress in the storeroom, especially when a patient needs emergency care. With Coleman Digital Assistant, staff can search for a specific item with a voice command to their mobile device on their way to the storeroom and know exactly where it is. Locating supplies in seconds rather than minutes, staff can spend more time focused on delivering patient care.

Taking action today

To help reduce turnover, healthcare organizations should address burnout, support and empower employees, and increase individual and organizational resiliency. Some potential strategies (as described in Deloitte's [Building a Resilient Workforce](#)) include: financial incentives for new and current staff; higher education support; redesigning care models; flexible work models; and closing culture and connectivity gaps.

Consider one area with significant potential to impact burnout: clinician scheduling. Employees value control over their time outside of work, and the sporadic nature of staff scheduling in healthcare is a significant contributor to staff dissatisfaction. Ineffective scheduling could also result in additional overtime, which can increase the overall cost of care. Healthcare organizations should evaluate the effectiveness of the scheduling solution as part of their ERP decision. The solution should be tightly integrated with the core HR solution (for skills, credentials and workforce information); with the payroll solution (for paying accurately based on the time records); with the finance solution (for proper accounting of the labor costs to the right chart of accounts and calculating productivity metrics); and with the EHR (for linking schedules based on clinical data of each patient).

Consideration #3: Drive digital transformation enabled by radically interoperable data

The healthcare industry across the continuum of care is on the brink of historic disruption. In Deloitte's [Future of Health](#) perspective, the future will be driven by radically interoperable data, open yet secure platforms, and consumer-driven care. EHRs were the start of digital transformation, and it now extends to all data. Consumerization of healthcare drives the next phase of transformation and will pull forward new capabilities that accelerate clinical research, personalize patient treatment, and improve staff experience while respecting personal privacy.

A requirement of the 21st Century Cures Act, the overall goal of the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA) is to establish a universal floor of interoperability across the United States. EHR vendors now provide basic interoperability, including clinical notes between systems. Accelerated innovation is expected to occur through the clustering of Qualified Health Information Networks, leveraging a handful of data platforms suited for healthcare.

Consumers and care providers alike expect seamless, personalized, and secure experiences that offer recommendations, nudges, and context for decision making. AI has multiple use cases across healthcare today, but without interoperability and secure access to data, the quality of analytics and insights is diminished. Organizations that adopt a strategy that connects clinical and operation data are likely to gain a competitive advantage and reduce costs over the long term.

Taking action today

A healthcare organization's two biggest IT investments are their EHR and ERP systems, both of which are critical to patient care and long-term financial viability. Yet, the two often function in their own siloes, preventing organizational-wide coordination and transparency across the entire business. Inefficiencies can result in challenges such as increased patient risk, reduced quality of care, reduced productivity and unnecessary inventory expense, redundancies, and financial vulnerability. While evaluating ERP solutions, assess the interoperability capabilities, how the solution can reduce inefficiencies in managing information across two systems, and the cost of building and maintaining integrations across two systems.

"Penn Highlands is excited to partner with Infor on another interface project. The Cloverleaf tool will modernize our interface engine, allowing us to be cloud based and giving us additional functionality and security to support our continued growth and expansion."

Heather Schneider
CFO, Penn Highlands Healthcare

The Infor Difference

Infor is the leading provider of [clinical interoperability](#), handling 300 million patient transactions daily. Based on extensive experience in interoperability Infor's Clinical Bridge solution enables critical connectivity between the clinical systems and the operational ERP system. Clinical Bridge helps you strategically manage supplies by seamlessly connecting EHR to the supply management system, synchronizing item master updates with the EHR in near-real time. Automatic replenishment and utilization updates are available for review from the EHR. That means capturing supply demand data directly from the clinical systems to enable up-to-date surgery supply information to ensure staff has the right items at the right place at the right time. The system also enables closer analysis of high-revenue areas, such as orthopedics, to provide more detailed information into costs and revenues.

Clinical Bridge also helps streamline patient billing by automating the posting of captured charges from clinical department inventory systems to the billing system. Up-to-date processing saves time and solves one of the biggest components of healthcare that leads to patient dissatisfaction—billing issues and errors. Patient billing is given an automatic status update, which is important in providing accurate and timely answers to billing questions and may also speed up payments. If patients are owed a refund, it is automatically issued from accounts payable. This ultimately leads to more efficient billing, supporting revenue on the operations side.

When it comes to eliminating siloes and batched processes, Clinical Bridge provides proven, pre-built adaptors for connecting Infor business applications and clinical systems, such as Epic® and Cerner®, throughout the organization. These adaptors are built to connect to specific data sources, map to the appropriate fields, and make this information available in real time. Users have the right information when and where it is needed for better decision making.

[Penn Highlands Healthcare \(PHH\)](#) leveraged the Infor CloudSuite Healthcare and Infor Cloverleaf Cloud to move to a more modern cloud architecture solution.

Consideration #4: Take an enterprise view and leverage your ecosystem of partners

In Deloitte's vision of the [Future of Health](#) by 2040, we anticipate a world where seamless collaboration is the standard and health is organized around the consumer, not the healthcare institutions. Today, hospitals and physicians often operate separately from health plans, pharmaceutical manufactures, and medical device companies. Forces of change, enabled by radically interoperable data and empowered consumers, are breaking down the walls and catalyzing new business models and enhanced collaboration across ecosystems.

Given the criticality of the ERP solution across the healthcare organization, it is important for decision makers to take an "enterprise view" of the solution, for now and in the future. At times, organizations take a functional view of a solution (e.g., HR, finance, supply chain) and either end up with a sub-optimal decision and/or run the risk of not securing alignment across the enterprise leadership groups. There are important linkages to other areas (e.g., interoperability with clinical systems, workforce scheduling) requiring the buy-in from other stakeholders such as Clinical, Operations, and IT. Collectively, these are not just individual HR, Finance and Supply Chain departmental systems—they are "work systems" that have interdependencies requiring a more comprehensive strategy across all disciplines.

Taking action today

As healthcare organizations prepare for the future, consider how to adjust business planning to promote strategic partnerships with technology vendors. While evaluating your ERP technology partner, it's important to understand their existing ecosystems of partners, their open solution architecture to enable future partnerships, and your organization's role in influencing their roadmap. In addition, involve the right internal stakeholders across the C-suite while making the ERP decision, encouraging all leaders to look through an enterprise lens, rather than an individual domain lens.

The Infor Difference

Infor's ERP product strategy for healthcare focuses on areas with a unique and differentiated value proposition and a partnership strategy with an ecosystem of partners across solution and implementations. One notable Infor partnership is iCIMS, the leading provider of talent cloud solutions. iCIMS provides Infor's existing and new healthcare customers with access to an end-to-end talent lifecycle, helping companies attract, engage, hire and advance top talent at the scale and pace that today's market demands.

Infor is also partnered with Amazon Web Services® (AWS®), the market leader for cloud-based infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) and platform-as-a-service (PaaS) for more than 10 years. The partnership is important for deploying Infor CloudSuite™ solutions in more than 21 AWS regions and 61 availability zones across the globe. In recognition of delivering strong results and helping customers achieve successful outcomes, Infor was recognized as the 2021 Industry Solution ISV Partner of the Year.

Other important partnerships include EHR companies for the Clinical Bridge solution, leading companies throughout the supply chain, and data and analytics enterprises, such as [Syntellis'](#) Axiom Healthcare Suite of intelligent planning and performance solutions, giving users robust EPM tools and the market's largest, most timely data-driven insights designed to improve cost of care and operational outcomes for healthcare providers.

"Today's unusual labor market is fueling a worldwide employment conundrum, and many businesses are struggling to operate effectively. Companies need a simple, connected HCM and talent experience to build and retain strong teams. iCIMS and Infor are a powerful combination that will support employers across the entire employee lifecycle and help them achieve business success."

Johnny C. Taylor Jr.
CEO, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

"We are excited to award Infor with this award, as they continue to lean into the AWS Partner Network and drive deep innovation. Infor drives industry-level focus areas and migrations for long-standing AWS customers, allowing them to focus on modernizing business models to drive customer success."

Flemming Kongsberg
Director, Global ISV Partner Management
AWS



Want to learn more about how to choose the right ERP solution for your healthcare organization? Want to know more about Infor's CloudSuite Healthcare Platform?

Please get in touch to discuss your challenges, your plans and how Deloitte and Infor can help.

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