Reviewer's report

**Title:** Toward Successful Implementation of Electronic Health Records (EHR) in Ambulatory Practice Settings

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 23 August 2008

**Reviewer:** Denis Protti

**Reviewer's report:**

Since the paper is very much a "How To", perhaps the title should be modified to "How To Successfully Implement ......

The Schoen Commonwealth Fund paper should perhaps be referenced in the opening paragraph, as should the recent Emperica European Commission study 'Benchmarking ICT use among General Practitioners in Europe'. Given that this paper is entirely American oriented, it would be of value to put the American situation in context with the international scene and perhaps address the question -- why do so many other jurisdictions seem to have less difficulty implementing EHRs - particularly in primary care settings.

On page 2, a bit more discussion between the terms EMR and EHR -- including the recent NAHIT definitions would be of value to the reader. This particular reviewer is of the opinion that there is a substantial difference in a physician office/clinic’s electronic record and a longitudinal (and shared!) EHR which encompasses all of a patient's data. While on the subject, it might be worth saying a few words about the PHR and at least acknowledge that this paper will not address the subject.

On page 5, reference could be made to the 2005 Protti & Graham paper about New Zealand -- it reinforces the importance that Practice Managers play.

On Page 6, when discussing "leadership", reference should be made to Sittig's seminal 2001 paper 'The Importance of Leadership in the Clinical Information System Implementation Process'. In the second last paragraph, surprised not to see 'a less stressful worklife' in the list -- as has been found in Denmark.

On page 8 it might be worth saying a bit about the difference between a leader and a clinical champion which discussed in the Lorenzi Riley text if memory serves me right.

Page 9 in the opening paragraph, the three items mentioned should be compared to the lists in the Schoen paper and Protti et al paper which compared Denmark's use of HIT to the province of Alberta.

On page 10, some mention should be made of Open Source options such as the office version of the VA VistA system. Similarly, it might be worth saying a few words about using an ASP approach which appears to be gaining momentum --
at least in Canada.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests.