

Attachment One:

Questions to ask to uncover additional vendor cost considerations:

1. How much will the entire installation cost, including but not limited to software, hardware, labor and travel?
2. What are the additional start-up fees beyond installation?
3. What is the warranty, including time frame and coverage?
4. What network security features does the vendor provide?
5. Does the vendor provide encryption options for the data? If so, what are the additional costs, and how are they calculated?
6. What are the license fees for the practice management system if it is going to be used on multiple computers by multiple staff? Is the licensing based on physicians or non-physician providers or users and if so, are there different rates for different staff (e.g., physicians vs. non-physician providers)?
7. Does your practice's current hardware meet the requirements for the practice management system's optimal efficiency?
8. If not, is your practice required to purchase hardware or additional practice management system software from the vendor?
9. Will you be able to maintain your current clearinghouse or other vendor relationships if still needed? What costs and transition requirements are involved in changing clearinghouses?
10. Is the initial staff training included in the cost of the practice management system? If not, how is the cost calculated (e.g., by individual, by hour, by day), and what is the cost?
11. Are there any additional costs associated with staff training (e.g., instructor travel expense, physician office reconfiguration and/or downtime)?
12. Will the vendor provide ongoing training for new physician practice staff?
13. Will the vendor provide refresher courses on a pre-determined basis? If so, what is the cost and how is that cost calculated?
14. Does the vendor offer an after-hours or emergency product service hotline? If so, what is the cost for that service, and how is that cost calculated?
15. What hardware support is included in the service contract, and what is the monthly service charge?
16. What is the monthly limit on the number of requests for support for either the hardware (if applicable) and/or practice management system?
17. What are the service contract's average fee increases per year?
18. What is the support service telephone number? (Be sure to call the support telephone number and ask basic questions to determine responsiveness.)
19. Does the maintenance agreement include ongoing training for new upgrades and features?
20. Does the maintenance agreement include upgrades for required HIPAA electronic standard transactions and code sets and changes to billing forms, such as the CMS 1500? If not, how much will it be to upgrade the software to meet these federal mandates, and how is the cost calculated?
21. How often does the vendor notify clients regarding new upgrades and services?
22. How does the vendor schedule and install upgrades?
23. How and when will the vendor notify your practice regarding HIPAA 5010 upgrades and services?
24. How and when will the vendor notify your practice regarding ICD-10-CM upgrades and services?
25. If applicable, what version of the vendor's practice management system software will the vendor offer an upgrade to in order to meet the HIPAA 5010 requirements?
26. If applicable, what version of the vendor's practice management system software will the vendor offer an upgrade to in order to meet the ICD-10-CM requirements?

This resource was developed through a cooperative effort between the American Medical Association and the Medical Group Management Association.

27. Are there periodic upgrades that require the system to be unavailable and then restarted? Does the vendor offer a “test environment” in which upgrades are loaded to allow you time to test and learn their functionality without affecting your live system?
28. Does the agreement include a plan for issues that are not resolved remotely? For example, will the vendor visit your practice when necessary?
29. Within what time frame will the vendor resolve the issues?
30. Will your practice be compensated for longer delays?
31. What is the vendor’s dispute resolution process?
32. How can the practice terminate its relationship with the vendor and stop paying any fees to the vendor: (a) if the practice is unsatisfied with the vendor’s products and/or services; and (b) if the practice chooses to cease using the vendor’s products and/or services?