Electronic Medical Records Procurement Process

Bureau of Primary Health Care

Will Gaud & Associates, LLC
The Process

- Problem Definition
- Process Identification
- Process Analysis
- Product Evaluation
- Vendor Qualification
- Request for Proposal
- Contract Negotiation
- Implementation

Don’t call vendors yet
In The Beginning …

- Get to know your health center
- EMRs come in various sizes, prices, and flavors
- The vendor is as important as the product
  - Quality
  - Service
  - Financials
  - R&D
  - Experienced Staff Does Matter (healthcare I.T. experience is very important)
What is your goal? (The problem(s) you are trying to solve)

- Problem definition – Identify each problem and determine why it exists
  - **One method:** Interview the staff (by department or specialty) and have them write down the problems they frequently encounter.
  - **Another:** Observing the various processes

  "You can observe a lot by just watchin’”

  Yogi Berra
Most Common Reasons (for wanting an EMR)

- “Increase Productivity”  
  (Why is productivity less than desired?)
- “Perform Outcome Studies”  
  (Are proper administrative procedures in place?)
- “We need to get a better handle on costs”  
  (Cost Accounting is not normally part of the EMR, are you prepared to invest on additional interfaces, resources, and/or systems?)

Source: Electronic Medical Records – A Guide for Clinicians and Administrators
Jerome H. Carter, MD
Product Evaluation

- Difficult because there is no standard definition for an EMR
- But…discoveries made during process analysis can be compared to the EMR functional specification presented as a Statement of Requirements
- BPHC provides the Functional Specification document (web)
Product Evaluation

- Two purposes
  - Tells the vendors what is wanted
  - Used as a resource document for evaluating the product, demonstrations, and site visits
Product Evaluation

- Concentrate on what is important for the function and not I.T. – technology is not as important as the clinical functionality
Vendor Qualification

- Length of Time in Business
  - Number of copies sold
  - Number of users
- Customers
  - Number of systems sold
  - Number installed
Vendor Qualification

- Financials
  - Audited financial statements for last 3 years
  - Banking reference
- Mergers
  - Are they taking care of their users following a merger?
Vendor Qualification

- Development & Technical Support
  - Number of employees exclusively associated with the EMR
  - Average experience
  - Average tenure in
    - Support, R&D, QA/QC, Help Desk
- Interfaces
  - HL7
  - Standards Organizations
Preparing the Request for Proposal

- Common Sections
  - CHC/Network Information
  - Vendor Information
  - Functional Specification
  - Support and Services
Resources

- Resources: http://bphc.hrsa.gov/CHC/
- Click “Programs/Initiatives”
- Click “Electronic Medical Records Resources Project (New)”
Negotiating a Contract