

# EMR Downtime Contingency Plan – Instructions



## Purpose and Scope

This contingency plan is used to maintain continuity of care and business functions before, during, after an EMR downtime event occurs and fits into the clinic's overarching emergency plan.

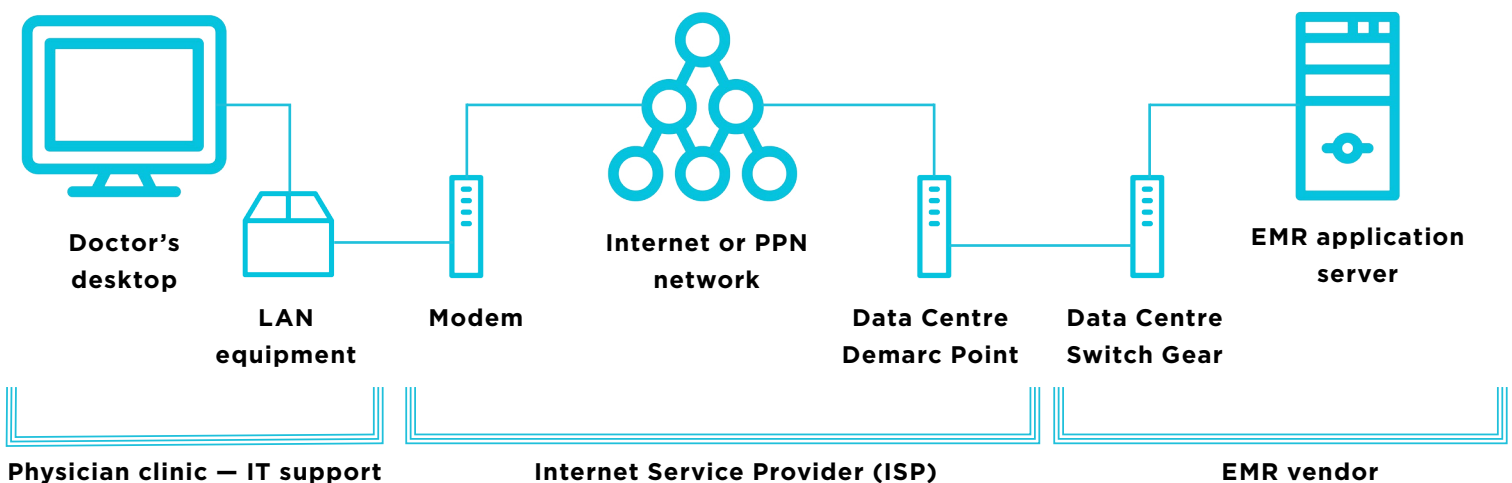
Once completed, this document will help to maintain enduring access to patient information in the EMR for pre-booked patients, identify processes for operating during the downtime, and establish plans for entry of data after the downtime to maintain continuity of the patient records in the EMR.

## Escalation and Support Model

EMR outages can stem from many different causes. There can be issues with your local network, your internet service provider (ISP) or your EMR vendor. Different causes will require you to liaise with different agencies or contacts, therefore it is useful to employ a systematic method when determining which agencies to engage with.

For clinics that are part of the Private Physician's Network (PPN), please refer to the [PPN Technical Support Guide](#) for more information on escalation processes and the support model specific to the PPN.

### The common escalation path for EMR outages is:



Doctors Technology Office (DTO) may become involved if issues cannot be resolved through the expected escalation path.

## The Steps to Follow:

The following steps are outlined in this document:

1. Identify lead roles in the event of downtime
2. Identify all contacts that may be required in case of a downtime
3. Review the Downtime Contingency Checklist
4. Complete a Contingency Plan for each Critical Business Function
5. Regularly check your EMR Business Continuity Copy (BCC) and this Checklist
6. Record any downtime events

### Step 1

**Identify and designate the roles listed below, keeping in mind the following points:**

- Each member will need to know their role and responsibility in the plan, including who will coordinate and support downtime event activities prior to, during, and after they occur.
- Each member assigned to a coordination or support role needs to be familiar with the primary technology, administrative and clinical workflow processes that require protection during short or long term downtime events.

*(See template)*

### Step 2

**Identify downtime contacts for all clinical and IT service providers**

*(See template)*

### Step 3

**Review the DTC Checklist (below), focusing on pre-contingency section with all staff, physicians, and local IT support as required.**

- The EMR Business Continuity Copy (BCC) provides a read-only copy of a cumulative patient profile for patients scheduled to see the physician within a range of days. The BCC provides a nightly download of patient charts for patients that have a scheduled appointment within a specified number of days of the current day. Patient charts are downloaded in an encrypted format that can only be opened using the clinic's EMR application. **The service varies across EMR vendors, so ensure several staff are trained on the feature's use and understand how it can be implemented in a downtime event.**
- It is recommended that you set a monthly reminder to alert the DTC coordinator to check the BCC and an annual reminder to review the contingency plan.

- After reviewing the Checklist, the DTC coordinator should make any revisions necessary and notify all clinic staff and physicians.
- Coordinate an alternative plan for accessing internet-based services. In the event of local network outage, you can still access many of your internet based services if you can restore connection in another way. Some other common methods for accessing internet-based solutions are:
  - Mobile hot spot (LTE).
  - Equipping your clinic with a secondary ISP.
  - Utilizing a different location with an appropriately secure and functional LAN and ISP.

## Step 4

The table below is a suggested way to record your downtime contingencies for each major business function. The clinic should fill in action plans for each business function, outlining what they will do as a contingency option. The clinic is encouraged to review its business functions and ensure that these functions are available manually if the clinic could not access their EMR application (e.g. lab requisition forms to be manually fill out by the physician).

As required, attach any other documents, templates, or checklists in support of your DTC Plan to help with future revisions including (e.g. Community Emergency Plans, list of people to contact when the clinic is down etc.). These critical business functions and their associated actions referenced in Action #5 in the Downtime Contingency Checklist the section titled “Downtime Immediate Response.”

Critical Business Functions	Action ( <i>below are options/suggestions only</i> )
<a href="#"><u>Accessing patient charts</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access the BCC</li> <li>• Implement alternative internet access solution</li> <li>• Consider use of CareConnect to access patient charts and history</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Receiving New Lab and DI reports</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone numbers available to call the Lab and DI Departments</li> <li>• Notify lab and DI to fax or call for urgent results</li> <li>• Consider use of CareConnect to access electronic results and other patient history</li> <li>• Consider use of Excelleris Launchpad to access lab reports</li> </ul>

<a href="#">Accessing patient schedule</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a blank paper schedule and handwrite patient information into the schedule</li> <li>• Blank encounter forms and billing slips should be made available as a temporary medical record</li> <li>• Initiate a manual process for patient phone calls. Patients can be called back once the system is back up to assign appointment times</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Accessing forms for the patient and healthcare providers</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper based forms should be made available in the patient care areas where documentation takes place</li> <li>• Copies made or information noted on Encounter form for entry into the EMR after the downtime</li> <li>• Consider use of <b>PathwaysBC</b> for an up to date forms repository</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Writing prescriptions</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice should ensure prescription pads are available for downtime events</li> <li>• Copies made or information noted on Encounter form for entry into the EMR after the downtime</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Dictation</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use your operating system's built-in dictation service. Both <b>Windows</b> and <b>Mac</b> have built-in dictation solutions.</li> <li>• Hand held devices for recording can be used</li> <li>• If no alternative, use paper recording system</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Orders</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For stat orders, the orders can be faxed to the appropriate care facility</li> <li>• For non-urgent orders, the test may be ordered, performed and documented on paper-based forms</li> <li>• Copies made or information noted on Encounter form for entry into the EMR after the downtime</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Billing</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forms should be available to document billing codes</li> <li>• Once the system is up and running enter codes into the system in a batch day by day process</li> </ul>

## Step 5

### Monitor Monthly: Your BCC and DTC Checklist

- Check BCC monthly (e.g. is it downloading the correct amount of data)
- Practice a “Fire Drill” (testing of the plan) at least once every year and run a simulated test to assess readiness
- Review the DTC Checklist as required (i.e. whenever there are new operational or staff changes affects the coordination of the plan)

## Step 6

### Record any downtime events

In the event you need to reference back to the downtime specifics it is highly recommended to document the key points related to the downtime. (E.g., Power Outage, Loss of Access to your EMR, Frequent intermittent access disruptions to your EMR, Occasional but regular disruptions of access to your EMR, Local Area Network or Computer failures)

*(See template)*

Type of Outage	How to Check or Diagnose	What Can You Access	Recommended Actions
Local LAN/ Hardware Failure	<p>You cannot access any websites or internet applications.</p> <p>Check router to ensure it is powered on and that it is connected to your Wide Area Network (WAN), indicated by a light.</p> <p>Attempt to connect using hardwire connection rather than wirelessly.</p> <p>Contact your local IT.</p>	<p>No internet application access.</p> <p>EMR BCC Module if enabled.</p>	<p>Use an alternative internet connection (ie. hot spot or different location).</p>

EMR Vendor Outage or Downtime	You can access other websites but not your EMR.	All internet applications other than your EMR.  If you use your EMR for results, consider CareConnect or Excelleris Launchpad.	Call EMR Vendor Help Desk.
Internet Service Provider Outage	You cannot access any websites or internet applications.  <b><u>Ping command returns</u></b> “request timed out.”	No internet application access.  EMR BCC Module if enabled.	Check ISP website for outages.
Private Physician Network (PPN)		Variable. May be able to access EMR or internet.	Contact EMR vendor or Telus