

PHASE 2: WHAT WE HEARD

What was the goal of this member engagement?

As part of our Digital Health Strategy work, Doctors of BC is helping to inform the Ministry of Health's development of a provincial **Electronic Medical Record (EMR) Strategy**. Our aim is to ensure that current electronic health priorities align with your needs in a post-pandemic environment. To help inform our understanding and advocacy on your behalf, we sought your input on:

- EMRs and EMR vendors.
- EMR functionality and information-sharing.

How did we seek member input?

Phase 1

Online engagement revisiting pre-pandemic perspectives on:

- Optimizing use of EMRs, EHRs, and other digital health technologies.
- Related Ministry of Health priorities.

Phase 2

Online engagement informed by Phase 1 findings; sought more focused input to guide advocacy on the Ministry's development of a provincial EMR Strategy.

What did we ask?

We asked for member input on:



Satisfaction with current EMR system and EMR vendor



Potential trade-offs related to EMR selection



EMR-related priorities

Who participated?

2,255 members participated

Type of practice

Family physician: 54%
Specialist: 43%
Other: 3%

Practice setting

Community-based: 56%
Facility-based: 16%
Both: 28%

Geographic setting

Urban: 65%
Semi-urban: 16%
Rural: 19%

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Physicians confirmed that they want simple, fulsome sharing of patient information across the province.

Interoperability and consolidation of EMRs to aid in interoperability were strongly supported; however, costs of EMRs, administrative burdens, and challenges associated with data portability continue to be significant concerns.

EMR Satisfaction

- 56% of respondents are satisfied with their current **EMR system**, while 43% are satisfied with their current **EMR vendor**.
- Costs related to EMRs were a primary concern, followed by lack of interoperability and data portability.

Interoperability

- Compared to other issues, interoperability was ranked the highest priority to lower costs. 58% of respondents indicated it is their main EMR-related concern.
- 7.4/10 physicians desire a smaller selection of EMRs with more interoperability.
- Enhancements that allow physicians to work from within their EMR, including managing referrals and prescriptions and accessing/completing health system forms, are a priority.
- There is greater interest among community-based doctors in determining what information to share and pushing this to a shared EMR, whereas facility-based doctors, or those working

in both environments, have greater interest in being able to query and pull information directly from other EMRs.

Data Portability

Lack of data portability standards remains a significant concern when physicians switch to another EMR vendor. Prior negative experiences with data portability have contributed to a reluctance to switch vendors, even when they are unhappy with a current system or vendor.

Almost 280 respondents indicated an intention to transition to a new EMR in the next year. In descending order, the most commonly identified reasons given for this were:

- EMR features and functionalities.
- The EMR vendor sunsetting/discontinuing the product.
- Product costs.

EMR Consolidation and Central/Third-party Management

- 81% of respondents would prefer to have fewer or a single EMR, whereas 19% would prefer to have the same or a greater number of EMRs in the province.
- The primary reason noted for preferring consolidation was that fewer EMRs would support interoperability and reduce silos and barriers to information sharing. Those supporting

maintaining (or increasing) the current number indicated that a free market/competition would support innovation.

- When asked about central/third-party contract management, 40% of respondents wanted more information before deciding, with 33% wanting a central solution and 27% wanting to manage their own contract.
- Where a central solution was considered, more than two thirds of respondents preferred that Doctors of BC play a central or collaborative role.

WHAT'S NEXT

Doctors of BC will use these findings, and continued member engagement, to guide our advocacy for development of a provincial EMR Strategy that reflects your needs and concerns. We will continue to seek your input to understand your evolving priorities, including seeking more information from you on central supports for EMR contract negotiations and pricing.