5 Things to Consider When Evaluating a Community Connect Host

Epic's Community Connect program enables large healthcare systems with Epic EHRs to "share" their systems with independent and small-group practices. But there's a lot to consider in selecting a host.

Most physician practices participating in Community Connect say the level of training and ongoing service and assistance they receive from their host organizations is less than they expect or desire, according to a KLAS report. That's why organizations increasingly are looking not just for an ideal host, but also for a partner to help facilitate and manage their Community Connect implementation.

At Healthcare Triangle, we've been that partner for many organizations, and we've found that there are a few key things to consider when choosing your Community Connect host.

Ask these five questions when vetting host organizations:

1 What do you want in a host?

Do you just want access to Epic? Or do you want the ability to leverage a shared patient population and data with other organizations? You need to think about your primary drivers for looking at Community Connect. Some hosts offer Community Connect with shared patients in mind, while others offer the program as a potential revenue stream. Neither is right or wrong, but this can be an important consideration to understand as you evaluate the offering and proximity to the host organization.

2 How much autonomy will you have?

As you evaluate the Community Connect offering, one of the most important things to understand is how much autonomy you will have. This can drastically change the Community Connect experience and impact the long-term partnership with the host. So, you'll want to ask:

- Who are the analysts who can build in system, and what can they build?
- Will you be allowed to employ your own analysts?
- How much customization is allowed?

3 What third-party integrations are available?

Be sure to ask what third-party applications are included in the offering. Are there specific third-party applications and programs that you really need? Can you get them through this Community Connect offering? Having a full understanding of what's included and what's excluded will allow you to understand the total cost of ownership. Eliminating unexpected or unplanned costs related to third-party applications while ensuring that the offering will meet all your business and operational needs is critical.

4 Do they have a mature governance structure in place?

It is extremely important to understand the existing governance structure and processes the host has in place. Determining how requests are submitted, documented, evaluated, prioritized, and processed is a must. Some organizations are very streamlined and efficient, while other programs struggle to effectively manage requests and communicate with the various program stakeholders.

5 Can you speak with current partners?

Whenever you make a big change like this, it is always recommended that you ask to speak to current customers. This will give you insight into all the items listed above and allow you to understand the quality and execution of the offering. Are things segmented appropriately. such as financials, reporting, and release of information? Talking to current clients may not uncover everything, but it should give you an idea of any existing issues or concerns related to the offering.

While this checklist is a helpful start the process of looking at Community Connect, you may also find that the process is more daunting than you expected. Getting help from an experienced third-party vendor can make the implementation smoother and more successful. To learn more about how Healthcare Triangle can help, visit https://www.healthcaretriangle.com/community-connect-and-acquisitions/.

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