

Family-Centered Care Recommendations for EHR Systems

By integrating family-centered features into Electronic Health Records (EHRs), EHR developers and analysts can empower healthcare teams to deliver more coordinated, compassionate, and effective care. CFHA recommends the following EHR strategies for the advancement of family-centered care:

1. Linked Family Member Charts

Purpose: Improve visibility into family health history and enable coordinated care.

Functionality:

- Link patient charts with clearly defined relationships (e.g., parent, sibling, spouse).
- Enable providers to view relevant family health data during clinical decision-making.
- Support cross-chart care documentation (e.g., couples therapy, postpartum care).

2. Family Member Visit Workflows

Purpose: Streamline care delivery when a family member attends a visit on behalf of the patient.

Functionality:

- Create workflows for checking in a family member for a visit when the patient is not attending.
- Clearly label these visits in the patient's visit history for future reference and continuity of care.

3. Proxy Access & Data Contribution

Purpose: Enhance communication and data sharing between families and care teams.

Functionality:

- Enable proxy logins for family members involved in a patient's care, with specified level of access.
- Allow family members to contribute data (e.g., symptoms, home measurements, concerns).
- Improve engagement and support for patients through shared access and input.

4. Family-Centered Care Dashboard

Purpose: Create a central location for family-level data, easily accessible by care team members.

Functionality:

- Identify family members involved in the patient's care and their relationship to the patient.
- Outline each involved family member's role in the patient's care, per patient's preference.
- Display data from family-level screeners and assessments, including changes over time.
 - E.g., postpartum depression, caregiver stress, family functioning, relationship satisfaction.

These FCC strategies offer several benefits to patients, families, and healthcare teams:

- Strengthens FCC across family units.
- Improves provider access to contextual health information.
- Enhances patient and family engagement in care processes.
- Supports care integration across related individuals.

See our FCC Resources and Exemplars page for a list of texts, resources, and research exemplars to guide the integration of family-centered features in EHR systems.