Title: Implementing EHR into the APN practice: implications for healthcare reform and patient outcomes

Purpose: Discuss the impact of technology on patient outcomes and how to implement the EHR into one's practice. Health care reform is committed to supporting EHR and APNs need to take a leadership role in these efforts in order to impact these much needed changes in our healthcare system.

Objective 1: Discuss the role of technology and EHR in health care reform

Objective 2: Identify strategies to implement EHR into the APN practice

Objective 3: Discuss the role of the APN in implementing technology in today's health care climate

Abstract:

Technology is the future of medicine and implementing EHR into primary care practices will significantly improve patient outcomes. This philosophy is consistent with Health Care Reform initiatives to lower health care costs and ensure affordable, accessible health coverage to all. Billions of dollars are wasted on health care system inefficiencies. The Health Care Reform Bill intends to improve efficiency and lower health care costs by adopting state of the art health care information technology systems. (Obama, 2009). Most paper medical records make it difficult to reduce medical errors, measure quality, or coordinate care. This Reform Bill will invest $10 billion dollars to adopt a standardized EHR. It is projected by adopting EHR an annual $77 billion will be saved as a result of avoiding duplicate testing; avoid improper drug utilization, monitoring standards and inefficiencies of care.

Given the need for implementing EHR in a world of increasing technology, a healthcare leader must step to the forefront to champion this cause. APNs are the health care provider to master this challenge. Historically, nurses have been the provider who interpreted and screened all patient data. The nurse practitioners in the NYU faculty practice exemplify how a group of nurses facilitated a successful EHR program in collaboration with the NYC health department. The DNP is the ideal nurse to lead this effort. The DNP possesses the ability to provide leadership to use technology to improve patient care and healthcare systems. They can develop and design technology programs to improve outcomes of care and care systems while assessing the efficacy of patient care technology. (AACN, 2006)

We must recognize the changes in the health care system. We presently have a health care system that is broken. We have patients who have limited access to health care, rising health care costs and significant inefficiencies in health care delivery. We have consumers who are empowered and want to be active participants in their care. As health care providers, we must embrace technology. The EHR, if properly implemented, allows providers to improve patient records through easy provider access to
patient data, legible charting, prevent duplication of services, prevention of medical errors, electronic prescribing, standard coding and billing, while maintaining patient privacy. The health care industry needs to implement a plan on how to institute this ambitious program. The Obama administration has pledged the funding for the program. The issue at present is how to actually implement this technology. The administration should appoint a DNP with informatics experience to take the leadership role to initiate a national EHR system. This system will only be cost effective and improve patient outcomes. For the EHR to truly be successful there must be a collaboration of the national and local governments, insurance companies, technology experts and healthcare providers.