Operationalizing AI in Community Health Centers

Deliberate, safe, transparent use of AI to improve care, access, and efficiency.

- Human-centered
- Compliant
- Transparent
- Patient-first

Why we’re doing this

- AI is already embedded in healthcare—our job is to use it intentionally.
- Reduce administrative burden so clinicians can spend more time with patients.
- Support clinical decision-making and improve diagnostic accuracy.
- Enhance patient access and responsiveness without compromising trust.

North Star: patient trust + safety + compliance.

Governance came first

What we put in place

- Formal AI policy early in the year
- Clear distinction: approved enterprise AI vs consumer tools
- Vendor and tool review aligned to risk and use case
- Staff guidance for appropriate use and escalation

Non-negotiables

- No PHI in consumer AI (e.g., ChatGPT) — not HIPAA compliant
- Verbal patient consent every time AI-assisted listening is used
- Transparency about what the tool does and why we use it
- Human oversight and clinical accountability remain with staff

AI-assisted clinical documentation

- eClinicalWorks + Suno supports charting during the visit.
- Patients are verbally notified prior to each visit when Suno is used.
- Consent is documented in the record.
- Benefits: more accurate and complete notes; less provider distraction; more patient-centered interaction.

Message to patients: “This helps me focus on you, not the computer.”

Operational and quality insight (Tableau + AI)

- AI helps identify patterns across quality, access, and utilization.
- Moves leadership beyond static reports to more timely decision-making.
- Supports targeting operational bottlenecks and monitoring outcomes over time.
- Enables earlier intervention when metrics shift.

Outcome: faster learning loops, better resource allocation.

Diagnostic safety: DermaSensor

- AI-powered dermatology tool to help evaluate suspicious lesions.
- Approx. 97% accuracy in identifying melanoma, basal cell carcinoma, and squamous cell carcinoma.
- Adopted after a real patient harm case: a missed melanoma that later spread.
- Used as an additional clinical safeguard — not a replacement for clinician judgment.

Design principle: add a safety net where “misses” are high-consequence.

Point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) with AI guidance

- Handheld POCUS used at the bedside for rapid assessment.
- AI guidance supports image acquisition and interpretation.
- Enables faster, more accurate assessments at point of care.
- Clinical decision-making stays with the provider.

Right care, right time — with the clinician still in charge.

Cardiac & pulmonary care: Eko technology

- AI-assisted ECG analysis and enhanced heart/lung sound detection.
- Helps identify concerning findings earlier (e.g., possible fluid in lungs).
- Patients can hear and better understand what we’re concerned about.
- Improves education, engagement, and shared decision-making.

Patient understanding is a clinical outcome.

AI for safety and patient access

Safety (human-overseen)

- Intelligent camera systems help detect escalating situations.
- Alerts support rapid response while keeping human oversight.
- Focus on prevention and de-escalation.

Access (Genie AI)

- Assists with call management and scheduling.
- Resolves routine requests when confident.
- Automatically escalates to live staff when it cannot.
- Improves responsiveness while protecting patient experience.

Legal risk: transparency is non-negotiable

- A first-of-its-kind lawsuit in San Diego against Sharp HealthCare alleges patients were not given the opportunity to consent to AI listening during charting in Epic.
- This reinforces why consent must be verbal, explicit, and repeatable for each encounter when AI-assisted listening is used.
- Governance + training + documentation protect patients and the organization.

Bottom line: do it right, every time — consent is the guardrail.

How we operationalize (the playbook)

Workflow & training

- Standard consent script + documentation step
- Staff training on approved tools and “no PHI in consumer AI”
- Clear escalation paths for questions and edge cases
- Routine refreshers as tools evolve

Oversight & accountability

- Tool inventory + vendor due diligence
- Audit logs / spot checks for consent and proper use
- Incident reporting and rapid policy updates
- Human decision-making remains the final authority

Patient-first AI, operationalized

Summary

We use AI to enhance care, accuracy, and access — while keeping trust, safety, and compliance at the center.

What success looks like:

- Better clinical focus
- Safer diagnostics
- Faster access
- Stronger compliance
- Higher patient trust

Q&A

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