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Integrating Patient Care Devices with Information Technology

The escalating number of medical devices designed with software-based features presents new challenges for hospitals and healthcare systems. To ensure patient safety and optimal performance, clinicians and hospital staff must prepare for this integration of information technology into a wide range of diagnostic and therapeutic devices. During a recent audio conference, ECRI provided guidance on navigating some of the stumbling blocks associated with convergence.

Presenters discussed protecting patient privacy, ensuring that clinicians understand how to use complex devices and making informed purchasing decisions. Attendees gained an understanding of key convergence-related policies to develop (e.g., patient data security), practical considerations for purchase decision-making and critical patient safety concerns. Audio conference participants also learned about key infrastructure issues and staffing needs that must be addressed in order to effectively prepare for the use of IT-based medical technologies.

As part of the conference, entitled "Navigating New Territories: The Convergence of Medical Devices and Information Technology", expert speakers discussed:

• Core competencies required to manage IT/medical device convergence

• Technologies to adopt now, versus those to wait on

• New business issues to consider

• Lessons learned from IT-based medical device implementations (e.g., cardiology PACS).

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