



| April 2023 | PracticeoftheFuture.com

# Practice of the Future



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Featured Provider

## Eye Group of Connecticut

We talked with Cindy Dunlop, BSN RN, the practice administrator of Bridgeport, CT's Eye Group of Connecticut recently, discussing the software they do (and don't) use on a daily basis, patients' future needs, and the keys to the practice's success.

Read full story inside:  
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## Letter from the Art Director

My favorite color has always been blue. Growing up with a twin, red was always his color and blue was mine. It was an efficient system to distinguish between what belonged to my brother and what belonged to me. My first pair of socks as a toddler was blue. My first bike was blue. My favorite toy was blue. My obsession with colors is one of the reasons I do graphic design for a living. Colors are kind of my thing.

So imagine my shock when I discovered that for most of human history, there was no blue! Now, I'm not saying that blue as a color did not exist, it did of course. But you'd be surprised by how rare blue is in nature. Blueberries aren't even blue, they're deep purple. Sure, there are blue plants, but they represent 10% of 280,000 flowering species. Blue is just rare in nature. I mean the sky is blue, and so is the ocean--but are

they? When we think of bodies of water, we tend to picture them as blue, but that isn't always the case. Sometimes they can be green, or clear. Same with the sky, when it's cloudy it's grey or white. Matter of fact, both green and blue were known as just one word in many languages ranging from Chinese to Old Irish. These cultures perceived these two colors similarly. To them, green was a shade of blue, and blue a shade of green. When they thought of water it wasn't blue, nor was the sky.

That's mind-blowing and a testament to the power that our native language has on the way we see the world. Learning all that left me with one thought: had I been born 10,000 years ago, my favorite color wouldn't have been blue.



Omar Mansour, Art Director

## Humerus Corner

**\*Something hurts for a brief while\***  
**Parents: "It's nothing."**  
**The Doctor: "It's nothing."**  
**Google:**



**Americans pretending to not  
be having a heart attack so  
no one calls an ambulance**





# Best Medical Billing Software for Small Businesses

by Monica Rivera



OK, you're looking to start a medical billing company, but you need medical billing software that is flexible and easy to use. With so many medical billing applications on the market, when you're looking to start your own company or manage a small practice, there are several factors to consider when deciding which software to go with.

## 1. Ease of use and accessibility

The first thing you want to look for is an easy-to-use interface that is intuitive and accessible on all platforms (Windows and macOS workstations and laptops, iPadOS and Android tablets). You don't want to waste time trying to figure out how the software works or where things are, because that time could be better spent doing billing instead!

You also want a system you can easily connect to from anywhere, whether you're at home or on the road, so that you and other employees can work from any location (even while traveling) without having to worry about connectivity issues or having data stolen by hackers. The last thing anyone wants is more headaches when working remotely! To accomplish this, cloud-based software would be best. The second thing is flexibility – if you're starting a home-based business you want not only an interface that's easy-to-use but one that also gives you options for different types of billing based on what specialty you are billing for.

## 2. Regulatory and compliance

There are strict rules and regulations when it comes to billing insurance and state laws that govern the use of software. Medical billing software must be able to properly bill for all procedures and visits to pass regulatory audits, avoid penalties, and maximize returns.

## 3. Clearinghouse

Every medical provider must bill through a clearinghouse. Clearinghouses are organizations that process payments for healthcare providers by working as intermediaries between insurance companies and physicians and their patients. With so many types of insurance plans, it's essential that you have access to a clearinghouse which will allow you to submit claims from the different ones. You must have control over how your provider is paid from one single location when dealing with multiple insurances such as Medicaid or Medicare.

## 4. Reports

If you want to run your business effectively, it's necessary to have reports that can tell you everything from daily totals to outstanding debtors and payment history. You can't manage what you don't measure.

## 5. A support company you can count on

Unfortunately, technology isn't always perfect. Running a business is hard enough and when you run into technical issues, you need a partner you can rely on to smooth out the bumps and quickly get you rolling again.

**Takeaway:** The best medical billing software for your business is one that can meet all your specific needs. There are many medical billing applications available to choose from, but you need a system that has user-friendly features, makes it easy for you to run your business and communicate effectively with insurance companies and providers, and will be readily supported if issues pop up. If you need help choosing the right software for your business, contact Microwize today!

# Microwize Is One of the 29 International Companies to Sign an Agreement with Egypt's ITIDA

by Andersen Silva

Microwize Technology, Inc, is one of the 29 businesses that signed an agreement with the Information Technology Industry Development Agency of Egypt (ITIDA), to offer remote employee services to medical practices and medical billing companies. The signing agreements were witnessed by Egypt's Prime Minister, Mostafa Madbouly, and other high-profile figures from the Egyptian governments and signed by Mr. Amir Gadallah, General Manager, on behalf of Microwize.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced most of us to acknowledge that remote work is no longer an experiment, but a requirement in many businesses, and even medical practices and billing services need to work remotely. While it represents a huge change, the results are very promising.

Microwize has been a leader in healthcare IT and medical software since 1997, with a very high customer service satisfaction rate that averages 97% over the years. "Due to the nature of the business and the suite of products we provide," President and CEO Robert Gabriel stated that "it was difficult to pick a country to match the high standards that Microwize clients are used to having." Mr. Gabriel noted that Egypt was shortlisted for many reasons, including: the availability of a workforce population with higher educations including medical-related and engineering degrees; many Egyptians speaking better English than in many other countries where English isn't the primary language; and the time zone difference between major cities in the USA and Microwize's offices in Cairo.



With pricing as low as \$525 per remote full-time employee per week, Microwize takes the burden off medical practices or billing services while introducing the best processes and technologies to help them thrive during the difficult financial times we are all facing. Microwize is also shouldering the high employment costs that medical practices are happy to give up, such as medical, dental, and workers comp insurances and unemployment-related administrative fees and challenges.

As Mr. Gabriel notes, remote work is a completely new concept for most employees; however, with the latest and greatest technology, the remote employee is constantly connected to the practice via camera and/or phone. The practice can always see and communicate with the employee as if they are in the same room, and the practice gets to enjoy the flexibility and financial savings. Mr. Gabriel stated that "Many of the remote employees' positions we filled were to cover for sick employees and work augmentations. Now Microwize is ready to offer qualified offshore labor to larger medical groups and billing services, to assist with front desk or back-office functions while maintaining high standards."

Microwize Technology looks forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship with ITIDA.

# Five Things to Consider Before Switching Your EHR System

by Monica Rivera



Technology is evolving almost daily, and your EHR system needs to keep up with it. Maybe you've been working in the same electronic health records system for a while now, and although you're comfortable, you are still not satisfied. An outdated system may often crash or lock up, or simply doesn't have all the features you need anymore. Additionally, you need to pay someone to sit around and make sure nothing goes wrong. If technology means everything to your business nowadays, why torture yourself with a system that's behind the times?

Innovation within the healthcare industry is constantly propelling change. Everyone is looking for something that makes life easier, increases efficiency and productivity, includes better support, and allows you to practice medicine the way you want to. However, there are several things you will want to consider before switching systems.

## **Assess your needs**

The first thing you should consider is your practice's needs. How many years has it been since you first adopted your current electronic health records system? Are you still the same practice you were when you adopted it? Chances are your practice has outgrown the system you are using, and you haven't even noticed, but have been dealing with the consequences. Be sure to research systems and new features that can help you better automate your practice and be more efficient.

## **Think about your data**

Another very important consideration is your data, and how to get it transferred to a new EHR system. Think of your software as a home, and your data is like all your valuable belongings inside that home. If you're moving to a new home, you need to plan how to pack and transfer your belongings there, without anything important being lost or broken. You may think that moving all your data is the best course of action, but it is usually not the most cost-effective option. You might choose to do some data clean-up to get rid of items that you haven't used in years. Look for a vendor that can help you navigate this hurdle. You will have to decide what information you need to carry over and what information you may want to get rid of. The way your data fits into the system may be different than in your old system. For example, you may have your lab information in a section called "Lab Results" in one system while another application may have the lab results stored under a section called "Attachments." Once you have migrated all your data and configured the system to your requirements, you will need to figure out how to get around, just like in a new home.

## **Think about your staff**

Think back to how the implementation of your current system went. How open was your staff to change? How long was the training period? Does your EHR vendor include training, or will you have to pay extra? Finding a vendor that offers several training options is ideal and will prove to be valuable during your implementation process. Does your practice have a practice manager or administrator with strong leadership skills who can help decide the right pace for the practice and staff to move forward?

## Think about what you expect from your vendor

The implementation process of transferring to a new system can take some time. When you're considering switching to a new EHR system, you also need to think about the support you'll be getting from your software vendor. Examine your current relationship with your support company; are you satisfied with the support they're providing? Do they answer in a timely manner and have a good understanding of your EHR system? A triage support member who can take down your issue and have someone call you and resolve your issue on the spot will make a great difference in your software experience.

## Think about your costs

Your EHR system is an integral part of your practice, and it's important to consider how much you're willing to spend. Although there may be inexpensive options out there, you get what you pay for and picking the "cheapest" option can often cost you more in the long run. Realize that technology in any business is an investment, and you want a return on your investment via efficiency, productivity, and overall financial health.

Switching systems for your EHR is a big decision, there are lots of options and it's easy to get overwhelmed and not know where or how to start. It's crucial that you take your time with your decision, assess your options, and weigh them against your needs. Keep in mind that this EHR switch could interrupt your business' workflow.

Most practices will find themselves in one of two situations: either they are looking to switch to a new EHR system, or they are considering how to upgrade their existing one. Whichever applies to you, it's important to do your due diligence and ensure that the system you choose is the best fit for both your practice and your patients.



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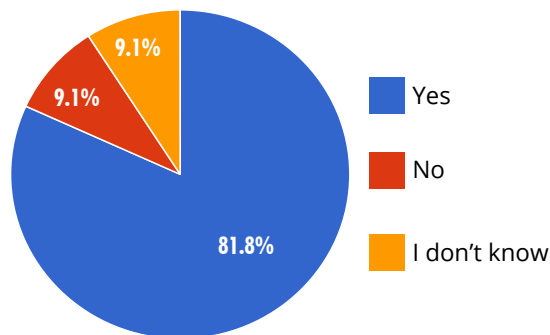
**microwize**





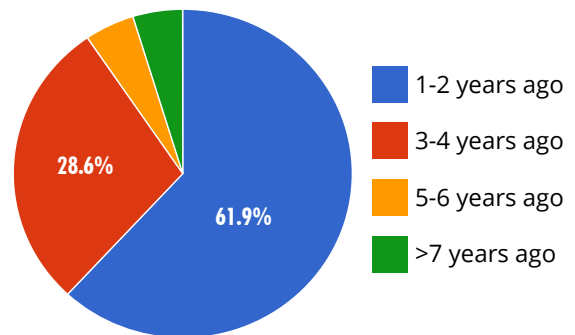
## 6 Questions About Software and the Economy

**Q1: Is your clearinghouse integrated with your billing software?**



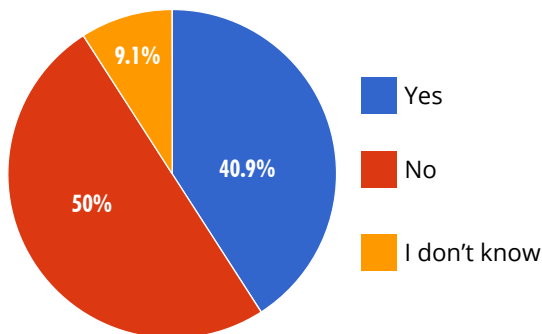
**82%** of healthcare providers' clearinghouse is integrated with their billing software

**Q2: When did you last upgrade your billing software?**



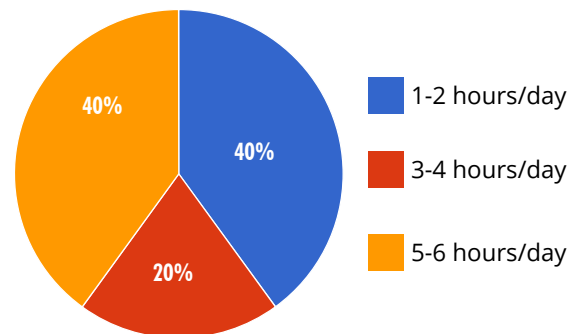
**62%** of healthcare providers last upgraded their billing software within the last 2 years

**Q3: Is your billing software integrated with your EHR?**



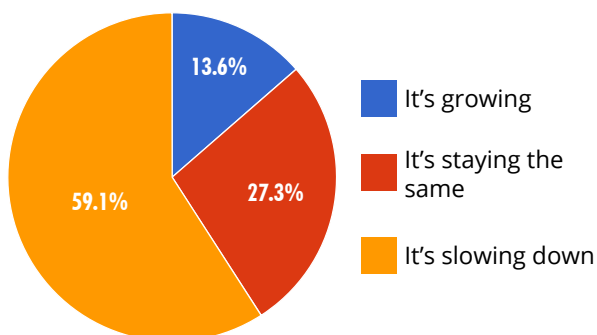
**50%** of healthcare providers' billing software is not integrated with their EHR

**Q4: How much time do you spend in your EHR?**



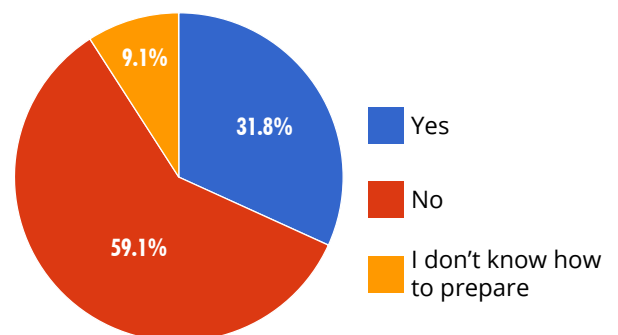
**60%** of providers are spending anywhere from 3-6 hours per day in their EHR system

**Q5: How do you feel the economy is doing?**



**60%** of healthcare providers feel the economy is slowing down

**Q6: Are you doing anything to prepare for a slowdown?**



**60%** of healthcare providers are not doing anything to prepare for a slowdown

90% of respondents are using billing software less than four years old; almost 60% aren't preparing for an economic slowdown even though the same number feel that one is coming. Might be time to batten down the hatches...?



# Case Study – Eye Group of Connecticut

Featured Providers: Jeffrey Kaplan, MD, Olga Konykhov, MD, and Nataliya Pokeza, MD

## **Q1: What software do you use for medical billing? How long have you been using it, and what factors were important in choosing it?**

Eye Group of CT has been using Medisoft for our medical billing since October 2000. The software is user-friendly, with features like easy submission/correction/resubmission of claims through Revenue Management, the A/R Tracker, and BillFlash connectivity for electronic statements and receiving and applying patient payments automatically. These features help us with time management and following up with claim determinations and patient accounts.

## **Q2: Does your practice use an electronic health records system? Why or why not?**

We have opted not to go with any EHR at this point after researching and viewing several systems. We feel that we have more control over the relevant content in our charts, and we often see errors in the EHR reports we receive. Sometimes we need to sift through a large volume of irrelevant information (since most EHR systems don't seem to allow sending just a history and few pages from the patient's last few visits). Mostly, however, it's just that we believe it will take valuable time away from speaking directly with our patients, treating them like real people and hearing their concerns, rather than filling in data on our computer screens. We have found a way to be more efficient and more accurate, and we are able to view our patient records even if the power is out, or the software is down. If we want to see the patient's last visit, we don't have to go searching for it, we simply turn a page. When we do a test such as OCT or pre-surgical Ascan, our data is stored on site where we can access it and back it up (thanks to Microwize's tech staff extraordinaire!) and not be concerned with the added burden of integrating it with yet another company to get it working with an EHR. We don't require annual software updates, additional staff training, and equipment to do what we do best, which is to take care of our patients. We know that we may need to go in that direction in the future, but until the current systems can become more efficient and talk to each other better, we don't see the benefit to our business.

## **Q3: On average, what percentage of the day does a single physician spend in the software vs. seeing patients?**

Our physicians do not spend ANY time in the software. They see patients / make phone calls / look at scans from our testing from that day, renew prescriptions (via a free-standing ERX software), and do lens calculations (online or through a proprietary application) 95% of the time. The other 5% of the day is spent charting and doing paperwork outside of the time seeing the patients directly.



From left to right:  
Nataliya Pokeza, MD  
Jeffrey Kaplan, MD  
Olga Konykhov, MD



**Q4: How does software help you treat patients in your specialty?**

Medisoft Office Hours is pretty efficient and we don't get bogged down with a lot of dropdown menus, which we have seen in other systems. It does help us keep our scheduling straight and is easily edited. We can build our own customized template for each MD, so that at a glance we can see all patients, appointment times, and reasons for visit. We also have integrated our MD surgery schedules and our testing appointments into Office Hours. This allows anyone in any department (who has access to the software) to concurrently look at our appointment pages and know exactly what is going on in our office. I like that we can view one day, one week, or one month at a time, and/or look at any parameters we want by MD. As a very busy office with three surgeons, it is very important to us to be able to revise and edit as needed.

**Q5: What is the differentiating factor that has made you successful in your specialty of care?**

First and foremost are the excellent clinicians and surgeons in our office. Years of experience and terrific word of mouth from patients are some of our best assets. That being said, we of course want our patients to have a great experience in our office, to feel confident in our MDs and our staff, and to have a positive outcome within the limits of any diseases present. We run quite efficiently and continually look to how we can do even better. Our staff shares our management philosophy of having a culture that treats our patients respectfully despite the very difficult landscape in healthcare these days. These past few pandemic years have been difficult for us as a practice, but also for our patients. We strive to have streamlined processes in place, so that care is delivered efficiently and competently, and we enhance that by treating patients as real people with real concerns. We aren't perfect but we come in every day with that goal in mind. Microwize tech support has been invaluable to us and helps us stay up and running consistently, efficiently, and cost-effectively. We've been very happy with their responsiveness and commitment to resolving our day-to-day issues as well as more complex issues with diagnostic testing equipment. We've established a great working relationship with the team (shoutout to Saif!).

**Q6: What do you think your patients will need in the next 5-10 years?**

In my opinion, I think patients will continue to expect great care, but will be more interested in learning more about where to find that care as efficiently as possible, and in a cost-effective way. They will be looking for alternatives to their high deductibles and limits of insurance coverage and time spent in provider offices. I also think patients will expect streamlined billing processes, and a way to take more ownership for the cost of their care. Additionally, more telemedicine options will be in demand.



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# Is Using Old Medical Billing Software a Good Idea?

by Monica Rivera

Using old or outdated medical billing software may seem like a cost-effective solution, but it can pose significant risks to both patients and healthcare providers. As technology continues to advance and improve, it's essential for medical practices to stay current with their software and equipment to avoid unnecessary risks.

## Security Breaches

One of the most significant risks associated with using old medical billing software is the potential for security breaches. As applications get developed and updated, they have more advanced security features to protect against cyberattacks. Older software may not have the same level of protection against newer threats, leaving patient information vulnerable to being stolen. This can lead to identity theft, fraud, and other forms of financial damage to patients and healthcare providers.

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***Older software may not have the same level of protection against newer threats....This can lead to identity theft, fraud, and other forms of financial damage to patients and healthcare providers.***

//

## Audits and Fines

Another risk of using outdated medical billing software is the lack of compliance with current regulations. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that all medical practices maintain the privacy and security of patient health information. Older programs may not have the necessary features to comply with current HIPAA regulations. As a result, healthcare providers using outdated software may face hefty fines if they are audited and found to be non-compliant with HIPAA regulations.

## Old Operating Systems

Furthermore, outdated medical billing software may not be compatible with newer operating systems. For example, older software may only run on older operating systems like Windows XP, Windows 7, or Windows 8. These operating systems are no longer supported by Microsoft and don't receive any new security updates, making them also no longer HIPAA compliant. As a result, using these older OSes for medical billing software increases the potential risks to patient information, as they are more vulnerable to security breaches and cyberattacks.

In summary, continuing to use old medical billing software is simply not worth the risk. Patient health information is sensitive, and outdated software lacks the necessary security features to protect against cyberattacks. In addition, older software may not be HIPAA compliant and could result in hefty fines for healthcare providers if they were to be audited. Finally, older software may not be compatible with newer operating systems, which can pose additional risks to patient information and HIPAA compliance. While it can sometimes be hard to justify the cost of upgrading software, waiting too long to upgrade can end up costing you a lot more. As healthcare continues to evolve, it's essential for medical practices to stay current with their software and equipment to provide the best care possible to their patients.



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