

# Houston Methodist Community Connect Frequently Asked Questions



## Product Overview

### What is Houston Methodist Community Connect?

- Houston Methodist's Community Connect allows you to purchase our best-in-class Epic EHR and practice management system to use in your practice — designed and priced to meet your needs.

### How does it work?

- Through a partnership with Houston Methodist, your practice can leverage our EHR which has a proven track record for satisfaction, and we are ranked by Epic as one of the top organizations using this technology.

### Why should I be interested?

- Access to Houston Methodist's best-in-class Epic system.
- An integrated clinical solution with a shared, unified patient record.
- Designed for independent, private practices.
- Regularly updated so you are always leveraging the latest technologies.
- Experienced implementation methodology.
- Highly personalized training.
- Dedicated Community Connect support team.
- Houston Methodist's 24/7 Clinical Help Desk.
- Advanced Epic Mobile tools – Haiku/Canto.
- Integrated Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP).
- The unparalleled safety, quality, service and innovation you've come to expect from Houston Methodist.

### What does the Houston Methodist Community Connect include?

- Access to Houston Methodist's Epic applications, including:
  - Patient registration (Prelude).
  - Appointment scheduling (Cadence).
  - Clinical visit documentation (EpicCare Ambulatory).
  - Houston Methodist MyChart patient portal.
  - Associated third-party software, interfaces, implementation and support services.
  - Option for complete practice management software.
- Third-party applications, such as:
  - Voice recognition software (Dragon).
  - Electronic prescribing.
  - Document management/scanning (OnBase).
  - Real-time eligibility notifications.
- Over 21 highly-developed specialty offerings.

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## Do I have to use Epic's practice management software?

- Community Connect provides two options:
  - Option One: Use existing billing service provider with an optional daily billing extract.
  - Option Two: Use Epic's practice management software.

## Will Houston Methodist provide billing services?

- Houston Methodist does not offer billing services, but the practice management software enables integrated practice billing and additional revenue cycle needs. Additional third-party claims administration and credit card processing contracts may be required.

## How long does it take to implement Community Connect?

- Implementation takes approximately 19 weeks from contract signing.
- You are assigned a Community Connect liaison to guide you through each step of the process.

## How long is the contract?

- Initial contract term is for 3 years with an annual renewable option.

## What if I want to personalize my system?

- Each specialty is custom built to specific configurations. During training, we'll help your staff personalize their preferences.

## Who can I contact to learn more?

- Contact the Houston Methodist Community Connect team at [HMCommunityConnect@houstonmethodist.org](mailto:HMCommunityConnect@houstonmethodist.org).

## Program Cost

### How much does Houston Methodist Community Connect cost?

- Houston Methodist deeply subsidizes the cost of Epic and required third-party components to offset your costs based on Stark and EHR Safe Harbor laws.
- You'll pay a reasonable one-time license and implementation fee and monthly support fee per provider.
- Contact us today to discuss pricing options specifically tailored for your practice.

### What is included in the one-time license and implementation fee?

- Epic licensing fees.
- Required third-party application software fees.
- Implementation fees associated with initial training and go-live support.

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## What is included in the monthly support fee?

- Dedicated Community Connect application support team.
- All system maintenance and upgrades.
- Houston Methodist's 24/7 Help Desk.

## How is a provider defined?

- Providers practicing half time or greater are eligible to participate in Houston Methodist Community Connect.
- Providers practicing less than half time are offered a reduced rate.

## Are there fees for providers who bill under another provider (e.g. physician assistant or nurse practitioner who bills under an MD or DO)?

- These clinicians are considered providers and are also charged a monthly subscription fee.

## Training and Support

### Will my practice receive Epic training?

- Training is required prior to receiving system access. Houston Methodist provides:
  - Classroom training.
  - A practice system called **Playground**.
  - A proficiency checklist, ensuring your practice is prepared for go-live.

### Will go-live support be provided?

- Houston Methodist provides onsite support during implementation.

## Data Security and Ownership

### Who really owns and manages my patients' data?

- Patient data is associated with the physician and practice providing the patient's treatment, accessible only to those involved in the patient's care.
- Epic has an audit trail for legal and tracking purposes.

### Where is the EHR data stored?

- EHR data is stored in Houston Methodist's secure data center, maintained 24/7/365.
- The data center is designed for high availability and to withstand natural disasters and other technical issues.
- Disaster recovery procedures are in place, ensuring data is secure and accessible by those who need it when they need it.

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## What happens if there is a separation/termination of Community Connect?

- Houston Methodist will:
  - Help your practice make an orderly transition of EHR services.
  - Extract practice data to an Epic standard format, paid for by your practice.

## Are data conversion services available?

- Patient data transfer from your practice's previous EHR may be available at an additional cost.
- For more information, contact the Houston Methodist Community Connect team:  
[HMCCommunityConnect@houstonmethodist.org](mailto:HMCCommunityConnect@houstonmethodist.org).

## Technical Specifications

### How will I access Epic in my practice?

- Epic applications are hosted by Houston Methodist, accessible via the Houston Methodist Apps Center, anywhere you can access the internet.

### What is the optimal Internet speed required to run Epic?

- A minimum internet speed of at least 50Mbps to 100Mbps is required.
- A detailed technical assessment is part of the initial evaluation.

### What hardware do I need to run Epic?

- Detailed hardware and network requirements are provided during the initial assessment.
- The hardware required to run Epic must be in place prior to implementation.