

Identify & Address Suicide Risk Using Epic Tools

Nearly half of people who die by suicide are seen by a provider in the month before their death. Epic has tools available to help healthcare organizations intervene with the right patients at the right time.

Epic has many standard tools available for use in suicide prevention workflows, and with Epic's flexible architecture, health systems can create additional tools including forms, assessments, and reports.

Screen Patients for Risk of Suicide

Understanding who is at risk of suicide is the first step towards intervening. Epic offers the following standard screening tools:

- The Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) with versions specific to primary, emergency, and inpatient care settings.
- The Patient Safety Screener 3 (PSS-3) for patients in the emergency setting.
- The Ask Suicide Screening Questions (ASQ) for patients 8 years and older, validated in primary care, specialty clinics, EDs, and inpatient med surg units.
- The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) to screen for depression.

The next step for a patient who screens positively is a risk assessment. The C-SSRS Risk Assessment is available in Epic beginning in the August 2023 version.

Brief Intervention and Safety Planning

After a patient is identified as at-risk, the best intervention is to provide immediate counseling by a trained professional. This process should be tailored to your organization based on your available resources and might include the following workflows.

When a patient is screened during a visit:

- A BestPractice Advisory can notify the provider to place a consult order. Providers might also place safety precaution orders or write referrals to behavioral health.
- The provider, in conjunction with the patient, can complete the Stanley-Brown Safety Plan, which is available as a standard tool in Epic. Safety planning is an effective intervention to keep at-risk patients safe in times of crisis.
 - Providers using Epic can see when a patient has a safety plan on file and can quickly view the whole plan.
 - Patients can view their own safety plans in MyChart.

When a patient is screened in MyChart:

- The patient can be presented with a customizable message outlining resources.
 - The patient can be prompted to schedule an in-person appointment or a video visit, or they can be encouraged to visit the ED immediately.
- Telemedicine can connect an at-risk patient with a behavioral health specialist for a brief, immediate intervention.

Follow Up with Patients

If a patient has screened positively for risk of suicide, following up after their screening or visit is crucial. Epic includes several standard report templates for tracking and following up with at-risk patients in any care setting.

Contact Us

Questions? Reach out to TalkSuicidePrevention@epic.com.