

Best AI Tools for Doctors to Manage Patient Records

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In brief

The best AI tools for managing patient records in 2026 fall into three groups - ambient AI scribes such as Abridge, Nuance DAX Copilot, and Doximity Scribe that turn patient conversations into structured chart notes; AI built directly into EHR platforms like Epic's AI Charting and Oracle Health's Clinical AI Agent; and record-retrieval tools such as Health Gorilla and Innovaccer that gather and organize records from outside systems. Most ambient scribes save doctors one to two hours of documentation time a day, but every AI-generated note still needs a physician's review before it's signed into the chart.

Managing patient records has become one of the biggest time drains in medicine. Doctors now spend hours each week on charting, retrieving outside records, and cross-checking data across systems that don't talk to each other. A new generation of AI tools is built specifically to cut that burden, some listen during the visit and write the note for you, some live inside your EHR, and others pull scattered records from outside systems into one place. Here's a breakdown of the strongest options in each category, what they actually do, and who they fit best.

AI Medical Scribes: Turning Patient Conversations Into Structured Notes

This is the category most doctors mean when they say "AI scribe." These tools listen to the patient encounter (in person or via telehealth), transcribe it, and generate a structured note, usually in SOAP or H&P format, that's ready to review and drop into the chart. The original audio is typically discarded once the note is generated, and most tools now support custom formatting so the note sounds like the doctor's own writing style rather than a generic template.

Abridge

Abridge is currently the top-ranked ambient scribe in the industry's KLAS report for 2026. It listens during the encounter and maps the conversation directly to structured fields inside the EHR, rather than producing a plain block of text. It integrates natively with Epic and several other major EHR platforms, which makes it a common choice for large hospital systems that need documentation to flow cleanly into existing workflows. Because it's built for enterprise deployment, pricing is handled through institutional contracts rather than an individual subscription, so it's better suited to hospital groups than solo practitioners.

Nuance DAX Copilot (Microsoft)

Backed by Microsoft, DAX Copilot is one of the most widely deployed ambient documentation tools in the country, used by hundreds of thousands of physicians. It provides real-time note generation during the visit, supports specialty-specific templates, and is the same underlying technology Microsoft supplies to Epic for its ambient listening layer. It's a strong fit for health systems that are already inside the Microsoft ecosystem or that want a proven, high-scale deployment rather than a newer startup tool.

Doximity Scribe

Doximity Scribe stands out because it's free for verified U.S. physicians, nurse practitioners, and PAs, no subscription required. It records the encounter, generates a note once the visit ends, and discards the original audio automatically. It works both in-person and through Doximity's own telehealth platform, Doximity Dialer, which makes it convenient for clinicians who do a mix of in-office and virtual visits. For solo practitioners or small practices that don't have an enterprise AI budget, this is one of the few genuinely no-cost options with real production quality.

Suki Assistant

Suki functions as a broader voice AI assistant rather than just a scribe, it handles documentation as well as voice commands for administrative tasks. A commonly cited case study found it cut note-taking time by roughly 72% for primary care physicians using it. It integrates across a wide range of EHRs rather than being tied to one platform, which makes it a flexible option for multi-specialty groups running different systems across locations.

Nabla Copilot

Nabla focuses heavily on note customization and multi-specialty templates, letting clinicians adjust structure and level of detail per visit type. Depending on the integration tier, it can either push notes directly into the EHR or hand off a formatted note for copy-paste into the chart. It's a reasonable middle-ground option for practices that want more control over note formatting than some of the more rigid enterprise tools allow.

Freed

Freed is built for fast setup, there's no lengthy onboarding, and a SOAP note is typically ready by the time the visit ends. Its "Learn My Format" feature adapts to the clinician's personal writing style over time, and "Magic Edit" lets doctors revise a draft note conversationally instead of manually rewriting sections. It also includes "Smart Visit Prep," which generates a pre-visit summary of the patient's history before the appointment starts. This makes it popular with independent practices and small clinics that want something they can start using the same day.

Heidi Health

Heidi distinguishes between speakers during the encounter and structures the output into established formats like SOAP or H&P. Beyond the core note, it also generates related documents such as referral letters and after-visit summaries from the same recording, which reduces the number of separate tools a clinician needs for a single visit.

AI Built Directly Into EHR Platforms

Instead of bolting a third-party scribe onto the EHR, the major EHR vendors themselves have started building AI documentation and record-navigation tools natively into their platforms. This removes the need for a separate login or integration layer, though it also means the feature is only available if you're already on that specific EHR.

Epic AI Charting ("Art")

Epic launched its native ambient charting tool, part of a broader AI assistant called Art, in February 2026. It listens during the visit, drafts the note, and can suggest orders based on what it hears, all without leaving the Epic interface. Art also includes a chart-summarization feature that prepares clinicians for visits by pulling together relevant history, which is reportedly used tens of millions of times a month across Epic's customer base. Since Epic covers a large share of the U.S. hospital market, this is a natural option for any practice or health system already running Epic that wants to avoid managing a separate scribe vendor. Epic hasn't published standard pricing for the feature, so cost depends on your existing contract.

Oracle Health Clinical AI Agent

Oracle Health has taken a more voice-first approach with its next-generation, cloud-based EHR. Rather than treating AI as an add-on, the platform is built around a clinical AI agent that surfaces insights, suggests actions, and lets clinicians navigate records and pull up information like recent labs or medications using voice commands instead of clicking through screens. It launched first for ambulatory practices, with acute care hospital functionality expanding through 2026. This is worth a look for practices on Oracle Health (formerly Cerner) that want AI woven into daily navigation, not just note-writing.

athenahealth athenaAmbient

athenahealth rolled out athenaAmbient as a free ambient scribe for all athenaOne customers starting in February 2026. Because it's included at no additional cost rather than sold as a separate product, it's a strong option specifically for practices already using athenaOne that want ambient documentation without adding another line item to their software budget.

AI Tools for Retrieving and Consolidating Records From Outside Systems

Documentation tools solve the problem of writing new notes, but a lot of patient-record work is actually about pulling in records that already exist somewhere else, a referral, a hospital discharge summary, a lab from another network. This category of tool uses AI to fetch, normalize, and deduplicate outside records so a practice isn't manually chasing down faxes or PDFs.

Health Gorilla

Health Gorilla operates as an interoperability network that aggregates patient records from multiple external sources and presents them as a single, unified view inside the practice's own system. It's commonly used by organizations that need a reliable pipeline for pulling in outside labs, imaging reports, and care summaries automatically rather than requesting them one at a time.

Particle Health

Particle Health works in a similar space, offering API-based access to patient records across major health information networks. It's frequently used by digital health companies and practices that need outside records retrieved and normalized programmatically as part of a larger workflow, rather than through a manual lookup.

Innovaccor

Innovaccer is built more for larger health systems and accountable care organizations that need to aggregate and analyze patient data across many connected systems at once. Beyond simple retrieval, it includes AI copilots aimed at care teams managing population-level patient data, making it more of a population-health platform than a single-practice tool.

Honey Health

Honey Health takes a different approach from the network-based aggregators above. Instead of only pulling data through existing interoperability networks, it uses an AI agent that can retrieve records not exposed through any standard API by directly operating the source system's own portal. This makes it useful specifically when a practice needs records from systems that don't participate in the usual data-sharing networks.

What to Consider Before Choosing One

With this many options, the right choice comes down to a few practical factors rather than picking whichever tool is best known. **EHR compatibility:** A native tool like Epic's AI Charting or Oracle's Clinical AI Agent only works if you're already on that EHR. Third-party scribes like Abridge, Suki, or Nabla are built to work across multiple EHR systems, which matters if your practice uses more than one platform or is EHR-agnostic. **Cost and practice size:** Enterprise tools like Abridge and Nuance DAX are typically sold through institutional contracts and priced for hospital systems. If you're an independent physician or small clinic, free or low-cost options like Doximity Scribe, athenaAmbient (if you're on athenaOne), or subscription tools like Freed are more realistic starting points. **Specialty fit:** Not every scribe handles every specialty equally well. Tools with strong template customization, such as Nabla or Heidi Health, tend to adapt better to subspecialties with unusual documentation needs than more rigid enterprise defaults. **Accuracy and mandatory review:** AI-generated clinical documentation is not error-free. Independent research has flagged cases where AI-generated clinical content contained meaningful errors, which is why every major vendor, and most health systems adopting these tools, treats physician review before signing a note as non-negotiable, not optional. These tools are built to speed up documentation, not to replace clinical judgment. **Compliance and data handling:** Confirm how each vendor handles HIPAA compliance, how long audio is retained before deletion, and whether the tool has a signed business associate agreement with your practice before rolling it out.

The Bottom Line

There's no single "best" AI tool for managing patient records, the strongest fit depends on whether your bottleneck is writing notes, working with your EHR, or chasing down outside records. Ambient scribes like Abridge, Nuance DAX Copilot, and Doximity Scribe solve the documentation half; native EHR AI from Epic and Oracle Health solves the navigation half; and retrieval tools like Health Gorilla and Innovaccer solve the "getting outside records into one place" half. Most practices in 2026 end up combining at least two of these categories rather than relying on one tool to do everything, and in every case, the doctor remains the final check before anything goes into the chart.