Editors Note

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Dr. Luchins raises some very critical points about the future direction of not just mental health services but all health services with the emphasis on computerization of medical records. He uses the term medical record very broadly to indicate all stored information about clients including assessment and monitoring. From his perspective of the literature he concludes that the field has not yet established the utility of automation beyond being responsive to accrediting and funding agency demands. He says that studies show that these efforts have failed to find positive effects on clinician behavior or outcomes. Since this is a “Point of View” article my role as editor is to allow wide latitude in expressing opinions in the service of debate. Here are the questions for you, the reader. What do

you think about his conclusions about the negative effects of standardization? Will free field notes, our current system, combined with some to be developed automation be a better direction for the field? Are the apparent problems associated with computerized records caused by the computerization or are a result of the selection, education and training of clinicians and the context in which they operate that may provide little or no accountability or incentives for improving client outcomes? Is it the computerization or is it that the information being collected is not clinically useful? Dr. Luchins provides some alternative approaches to collecting and reporting information to clinicians that deserve serious consideration. Write and tell us your point of view.

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