Prior to any large and significant enough HIT implementation, it would be essential to at the very least run a small pilot on a sample of the user base that is representative of the whole system. The (maybe) next best thing could be a focus group on said sample. At the bare minimum, some major issues could be anticipated with a basic inquiry or consultation for interested parties, such as pharmacists, providers and front line administrative staff in the given example. This last option would only make sense if these parties can be trusted to openly provide critical feedback and raise concerns without any pressure, in which case it would then still be necessary to make a more in depth evaluation before production level implementation.

The basic leadership skills needed in this case include the trust-building abilities to implement the adoption of a radically different way to approach workflow. In this example, this initial trust was probably fostered by the recent successful digitalization enterprise for the four hospital system. On the same token, this recent success might have hindered the humility to appreciate the importance of piloting an implementation that would displace responsabilities from a longstanding performer of a given task (ie, clinician med rec) to a different agent (pharmacists) that would require to be expanded to meet the new requirement. This between-human task-reassignment nature makes it a very different monster from many of the EHR implementations done up until that point. The implications of that distinction can be so dramatic, that I would say the needed (and in this case at least partially lacking) areas of expertise are all of those required to be able to identify that difference and it’s therefore differential impact in the HR, clinical, and operational levels.

A good start to address end-user goals for technology that are not realistically achievable would be a conversation. An open dialogue with representatives of the overall end-user pool about the potential downstream benefits, side effects and costs of adoption for a HIT implementation, would allow to more accurately identify what specific aspects of the technology are not achievable or unrealistically optimist. This allows to then assess how much of a big deal are the potential shortcomings and how worth it to push to troubleshoot them at the present time and context with the resources available and their potential use in something else.