

Case study

Family Healthcare Partners

From six offices within a 20-mile radius of Mercer, Pennsylvania, Family Healthcare Partners serves patients of all ages. Eight physicians, three certified nurse practitioners and two physician's assistants see approximately 1200 patients a week, providing services for acute and chronic illnesses as well as preventative care.

"EMR has had a major impact on the practice," states Dr. Edward Smith, partner and Family Physician. "Documentation and the process of managing chronic disease have improved considerably, and we are able to justify higher exam codes. We're able to maintain accurate and current medication lists and easily check formulary coverage. It is easy to modify medications, and refilling multiple prescriptions takes less than a few seconds. Also, internal communication between nurses and physicians is completely documented in the patient record vs. written on sticky notes."

CHALLENGES

Family Healthcare Partners was founded in 1995 with the merging of three primary care physician partners. Family Healthcare functioned using paper until 2005. At that time the practice decided to acquire electronic medical records (EMR) to increase communication across all of the offices, aid in legibility and detail, and meet the highest quality of HEDIS standards.

SOLUTION

Family Healthcare Partners implemented MEDENT Practice Management and EMR from Community Computer Service in 2005.

"We use MEDENT's recall and tracking DM/HM capability to help ensure patients receive the tests and exams recommended for their age and condition."

Gwen Pesci, Office Manager
Family Healthcare Partners

Family Healthcare Partners uses MEDENT for the creation of patient statements. Insurance claims are submitted electronically, and lab results are automatically routed to the patient's chart using the Lab Results Clearinghouse. The practice uses MEDENT's e-prescribing, the point and click DocGens technology and a medical content library tailored for a family practice. Their spirometry equipment is directly connected to the MEDENT EMR. Providers document on their wireless laptops or tablets while with the patient. All faxes are routed into the system and all mail is scanned in, which has enabled Family Healthcare to become totally paperless.

"If a report from an X-ray, lab or referral has not been received in four weeks," states Gwen, "we are alerted through MEDENT's patient reporting list. We then call the facility to obtain results and in turn inform the patient. We use MEDENT's DM/HM (Disease Management/Health Management) as a recall and tracking system to ensure patients get the tests and exams recommended for their age and condition. We track such items as diabetes, CHF, CAD, blood pressure, coumadin levels and whether patients have had PSA levels, colonoscopies, mammograms and immunizations. We then contact patients and make them aware of our recommendations." Dr. Smith comments that it is EMR which has made this doable. "There is no way one can imagine doing this with paper charts."

"We run a dashboard report," explains Dr. Smith. "It lists the diseases we follow with DM/HM. We compare ourselves with national standards and continuously improve our internal quality of care. We participate in the Pennsylvania Chronic Care Initiative, a project funded by insurance companies and organized by the state. There are financial incentives to participate, and it improves patient care and outcomes. MEDENT's DM/HM enables us to track patient care. Whether we're providing preventative care or treating chronic disease, the reminders that pop up are very valuable."

Gwen explains that in a number of instances they have found that they were under coding and under billing. "We weren't charging for services provided," states Gwen. "Now items such as EKGs and urinalysis are automatically fed in to the superbill. With DM/HM, it's easier to track what was addressed in an office visit. If a patient has a specific condition, there are alerts to address specific issues. When addressed, the service is properly billed. This has increased revenue for the practice, and there's no question as to what service was provided because it is fully documented and coded in MEDENT."

"The efficiency and speed of managing collections has improved," comments Gwen. "We can quickly print the ledger and a letter. The time to complete collection letters and billing of overdue accounts has been cut in half." Family Healthcare has used MEDENT's Medication Recall Reporting feature on three occasions when specific medications were taken off the market. "With a click, we can quickly run a report and find out which patients are on the medication," explains Gwen.

"I've been pleased with the platform that Community Computer uses," states Dr. Smith. "It's nice that the laptop is portable. The system is quick, and support is very good. Nicole, Bridget and Allison have been very helpful in writing DM/HM

formulas.” Gwen explains that Community Computer is quick to respond to support requests, typically getting back to them in less than 15 minutes.

RESULTS

Family Healthcare Partners has experienced significant improvement in the legibility and accuracy of documentation, the management of chronic disease, the accuracy and efficiency of prescribing, and the capturing and completeness of internal communication. The practice is more efficient because they know where everything is located in the chart. Patient care has improved, and the time required to manage collections has been cut in half.

“We are NCQA certified in heart stroke,” states Gwen. “We are approved as a multi-site, and in four to six months we expect to be certified as a Medical Home. In the future, we plan to increase DM/HM reporting. Also, we plan to provide patient e-mail access to enable communication via MEDENT and our website.”

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