Case study
Trumbull Mahoning Medical Group

With one location in Trumbull County in Cortland, Ohio and two satellite offices in Mahoning County, Trumbull Mahoning Medical Group treats over 1500 patients a week. Focused on internal medicine and family care, the practice serves a broad age range from newborns to the elderly. Staff includes 15 full-time physicians, seven R.N.s and 16 medical assistants. Total staff numbers 95.

"We could not have met Meaningful Use without MEDENT," states Debra Stevens, Office Manager, Trumbull Mahoning Medical Group. "MEDENT's Disease Management enables us to identify which patients need preventative follow-up and which are up-to-date. Doctors and nurses can easily check how they are doing, and for attestation I simply run a report. MEDENT has enabled us to become more efficient, and its integration with Talksoft's appointment reminder software saves valuable staff time."

CHALLENGES

Previously managed by a hospital, a group of physicians formed Trumbull Mahoning Medical Group in 1981. When Debra Stevens joined the group in 1998, the practice was using Elcomp management software. Soon the practice decided to move to electronic health records. They evaluated new software from Elcomp as well as MEDENT from Community Computer Service. MEDENT was chosen because of its point and click, ease of use and extensive built-in functionality.

SOLUTION

Trumbull Mahoning Medical Group implemented MEDENT Practice Management and EMR in 2000.

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> Debra Stevens, Office Manager
> Trumbull Mahoning Medical Group

From the time it was implemented, Debra Stevens was impressed with the MEDENT software. "MEDENT is easy to use, and so much functionality is built into the system," explains Debra. "It's easy to train employees, even 60-year-olds who have never touched a keyboard. And over the years MEDENT has kept up with technology."

Trumbull Mahoning Medical Group uses the Lab Results Clearinghouse and has found integrating medical equipment with MEDENT very easy. Currently most physicians use MEDENT's point and click and templates or Dragon speech recognition software. A few physicians still hand write their notes and scan them into the system. The MEDENT system has enabled the practice to accommodate the diverse group of physicians within the practice, with some eager to use new technology and others inclined to stay with what they did in the past.

Trumbull Mahoning uses MEDENT's Disease Management (DM) formulas. "We could not have met Meaningful Use without MEDENT," states Debra. The practice uses both practice-wide and individual chart DM tracking reports to identify patients who need preventive follow-up for everything from flu vaccination to colonoscopies to eye exams. DM enables them to easily track which patients are due for various procedures and which patients are up-to-date.

"MEDENT has dramatically simplified Meaningful Use for the practice," explains Debra. "Every day doctors and nurses can check to understand how they are doing. MEDENT has wonderful dials, which are similar to speedometers. Staff can go to Chart Central in MEDENT, and click to be taken to wherever in the system they want to go. It basically takes the thinking out of Meaningful Use. And when it came time for attestation, I simply had to run a report to meet the reporting requirement. MEDENT has helped make us successful."

Trumbull Mahoning uses the Ohio Immunization Registry. "With MEDENT, we were set up right from the get go," states Debra. "It is very easy to upload what is needed, and the process is very smooth. I have assigned one medical assistant to track and submit to the Registry, and it gets to the person in Ohio who tracks immunizations."

Before two years ago, the practice used an appointment reminder system which was not integrated with MEDENT. "When I learned that MEDENT had affiliated with Talksoft and that the two systems were integrated, moving to Talksoft was a no brainer," states Debra." I had immediate confidence in any company with which MEDENT had affiliated. We switched to Talksoft and we've been extremely pleased with the interface and its integration with MEDENT. It is very easy to use. Talksoft does all of the work, and we don't have to use valuable staff time to call and remind patients of their appointments. We can see at a glance that a patient has been reached and that a message was left. We know who wants to re-schedule. If a patient complains that they were not called, staff can easily verify whether a call was made and what occurred since the system keeps a complete history of all calls."

"One of the most eye-opening aspects of MEDENT was in downsizing staff, which we were able to do through attrition. When someone retired or left the practice, they were not replaced. Our ability to reduce staff is due to MEDENT's

automation of such functions as auto-post and billing. Using MEDENT is so easy and exact. It dramatically simplifies accounting and the day-to-day running of the practice. In 2000, I had 12 people supporting 15 doctors, and overhead was eight percent of revenue. Now I have five people supporting the same number of doctors, and overhead has dropped to 4.1 percent of revenue."

"Doctors and medical assistants have become more efficient and productive. To do progress notes, the doctors bring their laptops into the exam room and use point and click. Doctors love the e-prescribing and find it very easy to use. They do a couple of clicks and the job is done. For the medical assistants, tasks such as faxing information to other providers or making referrals is seamless and it makes their job much easier."

The practice will begin using the Patient Portal in the next couple of weeks, starting in one office and implementing it in phases. "I've trained front office staff to sign people up for the portal. Initially patients will be able to update their records and insurance information, and medical assistants will notify them by e-mail when their lab results are within normal range and can be viewed on the portal." Implementation will be an evolving process given the diverse group of providers at the practice each of which has, for example, their own individual page list of requirements related to scheduling of appointments.

In addition to implementing the Patient Portal, the physicians who still hand write their notes soon will move to Dragon speech recognition. Trumbull Mahoning also plans to integrate reports from local hospitals so that records go directly into the patient's chart and to use Surescripts Direct to make referrals. It is a Meaningful Use Stage 2 objective and is built into MEDENT. "The October 2014 federally mandated ICD10 codes have us up in arms," exclaims Debra. "In ICD9 there were 17,000 codes. In ICD10 there will be 69,000 codes. I'm confident the new version of MEDENT will be a big help in enabling us to meet the federal mandate."

Debra describes her overall experience with MEDENT as outstanding. "I've never had an issue," states Debra. "Staff at MEDENT listen and are always personable. Some tasks which are performed only once a year – such as uploading PTS codes – are easy to forget. Customer service is always willing to be helpful and walk me through such a process."

RESULTS

MEDENT has enabled Trumbull Mahoning Medical Group's providers and administrative staff to become more productive and efficient. Overhead costs for the accounting processes have dropped from eight percent of revenue to approximately four percent, and the MEDENT system has been key to the practice's success with Meaningful Use. "MEDENT is definitely the best EMR and practice management system out there," states Debra, "and I'm confident MEDENT will help us meet new federal mandates."