

Case study

Middlebury Family Health

Providing family practice services to patients in every age range, Middlebury Family Health sees 250 to 260 patients a week. Located in Middlebury, Vermont, staff consists of four physicians, four nurses, and five administrative and support personnel, augmented by two per diem nurses. In August, 2011, Middlebury Family Health became the first practice in Vermont to achieve Meaningful Use. It is also certified as a Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Home.

“MEDENT EHR has enabled us to be sure we have the information we need for Meaningful Use and Medical Home,” states Michelle Clark, MEDENT Specialist for Middlebury Family Health, “and MEDENT has great reporting capabilities, making it possible to easily run the reports we need. Practices with other systems are really struggling and have to pay extra for functionality that is already in MEDENT.”

CHALLENGES

Founded in 1999 by three M.D.s, Eileen Fuller, Dayle Klitzner and Linn Larson, Middlebury Family Health used a rudimentary practice management system and paper charts. In 2010, their top priority became to achieve Meaningful Use and Medical Home Level 3 certification. The practice began looking for an EHR to help them achieve their near-term goal and meet the needs of the practice for the long-term.

SOLUTION

In January, 2011, Middlebury Family Health implemented MEDENT Practice Management and EHR from Community Computer Service

“Reimbursements from Meaningful Use will offset the cost of MEDENT, and payments for Medical Home will noticeably increase revenue for the practice.”

Stacy Ladd, Practice Administrator
Middlebury Health Center

Middlebury Family Health uses the Lab Results Clearinghouse. Most patients' labs are drawn in the office and sent out to the Porter Hospital lab. All results come back directly to the patients' chart through the interface with Porter Hospital. Middlebury's providers use point and click and some free texting to document patient visits. The practice uses templates similar to what they used for paper charts. In the future, they expect to directly integrate their medical equipment with MEDENT. Middlebury uses e-prescribing which immediately checks for drug-drug interactions and drug-allergy interactions.

"We have begun to graph lab results and meds in flowsheets," explains Michelle Clark, "and we'll do more extensive graphing of comparisons as we accumulate more lab results history in the EHR. We make extensive use of the Disease Management tracking reports both practice-wide and for specific doctors. MEDENT reports are user friendly and interactive, and the EHR tracks when a patient is overdue for a follow-up visit or test. We can easily create a letter or call the patient to schedule an appointment."

"The MEDENT system provides a great summary to track for Meaningful Use. Using the MEDENT dashboard, we worked with MEDENT support to be sure we acquired the data we needed. When the time came to attest, all of the information was right there. We didn't have to search for the required information. Other systems don't have the reporting capability that MEDENT does. Vermont was amazed that we had perfect data, the exact data needed before our attestation. Pulling the data involved no manual work."

"We were certified as a Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Home on July 29," states Stacy Ladd. "There is considerable commonality in what is needed for Meaningful Use and Medical Home. For both, we're focused on three chronic diseases: diabetes, hypertension and hyperlipidemia." Michelle explains further, "Meaningful Use was in place, and we were able to use it for Medical Home. Medical Home is not a one-time deal. It requires reports continuously or monthly or quarterly. We're able to easily locate and pull the data needed such as triage response time, vital signs or number of well-child visits."

"MEDENT has had a major impact on communication and documentation. Previously we communicated a lot verbally, but it wasn't documented in the chart. Now every little piece is documented. For example, we can track patient requests in triage at all times. If a patient calls back, we can quickly learn status. Patients now walk out with a Clinical Visit Summary which includes information such as allergies and medications. If there's need for an update, the patient can call and we can change it right in the system, and all of the information is legible. It helps the patient and the practice."

Stacy and Michelle rate their overall experience with Community Computer as excellent. "Response has been great," states Michelle. "Often we get a call back within ten minutes. We feel we have a relationship with the support team and know the people. This is very unlike other practices who have purchased other EHRs. Often they are put on hold for long periods of time, and it takes weeks to resolve problems." Stacy adds that they had a great trainer from Community Computer who adapted his training to employees' different styles and ability to learn the system.

RESULTS

When Middlebury Family Health invested in MEDENT, they had specific goals which were to achieve Meaningful Use and Level 3 certification as a Medical Home. In under seven months those goals have been achieved. Communication within the practice and with patients has been streamlined, documentation is more thorough, they have become more efficient and improved patient care.

“Reimbursements from Meaningful Use will offset the cost of MEDENT,” states Stacy, “and monthly payments for Medical Home will noticeably increase revenue for the practice. Some practices have paid a couple of hundred thousand dollars for their system, and they are struggling and have nothing to show for their investment. We have achieved a lot, and it’s because we chose MEDENT.”

“In the future, we plan to implement a patient portal, Meaningful Use Phase II, and interfaces with the registry for Vermont,” explains Michelle. “We want to implement more patient education for Medical Home and develop resources such as a dietitian and a social worker using Community Health Team resources.”

August 12, 2011 – First Vermont Practice, Middlebury Family Health,
Achieves Meaningful Use



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