

Case study

Women Gyn & Childbirth Associates

An obstetrics and gynecology practice serving female patients from puberty to old age, providers at Woman Gynecology & Childbirth Associates see about 600 patients a week. With offices in Brighton, Webster and Greece, New York, the practice is staffed with five full-time physicians, four physician assistants and three midwives. In addition, there are four sonographers, eight registered nurses, nine medical assistants and 18 front office, billing and administrative staff.

“With MEDENT, we are able to get the data we need for the business end,” states Jane Dodds, Practice Administrator for Women Gynecology & Childbirth Associates. “Compared to our old system, management of accounts receivable, billing and appointment scheduling is better, Meaningful Use is easier for staff and providers, and we’ve improved patient care and communication.”

CHALLENGES

Women Gynecology & Childbirth Associates was founded in 1989 by a group of female physicians, including Coral Surgeon, M.D. and Elizabeth Morningstar, M.D. who remain in the practice today. In 2010, they moved from paper to an electronic system but found it lacked integration and did not provide the data they needed. The practice evaluated new systems including some which specialized in OB/GYN practices. Requirements included an integrated practice management and EMR and reliable support, data and reporting. They wanted a system which would keep up with regulations and the changes they knew were coming.

SOLUTION

Women Gyn & Childbirth Associates implemented MEDENT Practice Management and EMR in May, 2013.

“With MEDENT, prenatal records are integrated with the rest of the system. Information needs to be input only once and is right at your fingertips.”

Coral Surgeon, M.D., physician & president
Women Gynecology & Childbirth Associates

Women Gynecology & Childbirth Associates' choice of MEDENT was influenced by the fact that MEDENT Inc. works closely with insurance companies in New York and with the Rochester Health Information Organization (RHIO) which the practice now uses to transmit and receive lab results. E-prescribing and the associated checks for drug-drug interactions and drug-allergy interactions is especially important in an OB/GYN practice. "MEDENT provides safety in terms of medications," states Dr. Surgeon, "and is seamless for e-prescribing."

Women Gynecology makes extensive use of MEDENT's Disease Management (DM) functionality. Care Plans are useful tools for a patient's specific diagnosis. "If a patient has irregular bleeding, the Care Plan calls up a battery of diagnostic procedures such as an ultrasound, a histogram and specific tests and meds," explains Dr. Surgeon. "These show as pop ups and make selection seamless for the physician. With a click, the selection downloads into my notes. If I want to order a specific test such as blood work, the order for the blood work is generated and automatically faxed to the lab."

"We use DM templates structured to ask appropriate questions," continues Dr. Surgeon. "For example, if a patient is experiencing pain there is a different set of questions than if the patient is experiencing bleeding. When we open the patient's chart, we see a quick synopsis, including health maintenance information." Jane Dodds explains that the practice uses DM reporting to identify which patients are due for particular procedures such as pap tests and mammograms and to run pre-customized prenatal reports which list patients by due dates, enabling proactive management of appointment needs and provider availability.

"We've used the Patient Portal since the day we went live," states Jane. "We explain the portal to patients when they call for an appointment and mail them portal letters. We encourage patients to fill out their history and meds online. Over two-thirds login to look at the portal and many use it. They use the portal to request appointments and prescription refills and to check lab results. When a patient requests an appointment, the secretary messages or calls the patient to determine with which provider the patient should be scheduled. Since we're a busy practice, we schedule appointments no longer than four months out to ensure they are scheduled with the right provider and to manage providers' time."

"Messages are responded to within 24 hours," continues Jane. "The concern was that messages would be more work whereas it's actually less. When the message is about a clinical issue, the message is triaged by a physician assistant or midwife. If patients update their history online, it results in notification to the physician only if it's clinically significant, in which case it is triaged to the doctor for review. Many of the messages are simple such as providing a new address or an insurance company change. These messages are handled by administrative staff and are easier to manage than a phone call since the staff person can respond on their own time.

The practice is participating in Meaningful Use. "We first attested for Meaningful Use in 2012 under our old software system," explains Jane. "We had to work very hard to do it. MEDENT was a breath of fresh air. It's much easier with MEDENT because of the Dashboard which keeps providers aware of their status.

With MEDENT, measurement of Meaningful Use is easier for our staff and easier for providers because they understand what the expectations are.”

A couple of doctors have reported to Jane that they spend less time charting patient notes now than under the old system. “We’ve been able to improve patient care due to information being available to all providers in the practice. We’ve also been able to better identify high risk patients and predict and manage appointment needs. We can identify any need to rework the schedule or add clinical hours. Our goal is to have enough appropriate appointments to accommodate our patients.”

Jane notes there has been a dramatic improvement in management of accounts receivable and billing using MEDENT. “With the old system, we were not able to get reliable accounts receivable and we couldn’t compare payers or providers. I didn’t trust that the revenue cycle was being optimized. Staff now verify insurance prior to a patient being seen, and we’re more aggressive about collecting upfront because we have accurate information. We can now get interactive reports for the billing department and can identify and resolve issues more quickly. Dealing with problem claims is far superior. Under the old system we couldn’t find old, unpaid claims, and running reports was cumbersome. I can now be confident the numbers are valid.

Women Gynecology now uses TalkSoft, a MEDENT partner, for appointment reminders. “With the old system, someone had to go online, set up the calls and physically look at the results,” states Jane. “It took at least 10 to 15 minutes of staff time every day. Now the data from TalkSoft alerts us that we need to verify a phone number or appointment. Appointment reminders are much more efficient.”

“MEDENT has been wonderful,” states Jane. “Although we were anxious to get going, the company never overpromised. Timing of training was appropriate, and the timing and implementation of the system was well done.”

RESULTS

MEDENT has had a positive impact on Women Gynecology & Childbirth Associates in numerous ways, including better managing accounts receivable, billing and appointment scheduling, increasing the efficiency of providers and administrative staff and improving patient care and communication.

“A future goal is to do network-to-network transmission over MEDENT’s N2N sharing,” describes Jane. “I’m also hopeful that we’ll be able to do appointment reminders via text message on cell phones.”