

# Fast and Easy Access to Patient Information Has Enabled Greater Efficiency and Productivity

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Recognizing they needed to upgrade their billing and practice management software, Bernacki Family Practice and Wellness Center decided to move to a new system which would handle all of their needs. They chose MEDENT Practice Management and EMR from Community Computer Service. Today the Bernacki practice has fast and easy access to patient information, enabling them to be more efficient and productive as well as increase and speed-up collections. They have been able to serve a larger number of patients and reduce costs. In the future, they expect to be able to manage each disease state and patient with even greater efficiency and effectiveness.

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## Situation

Located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Bernacki Family Practice and Wellness Center provides families a wide range of services from general management of chronic diseases to skin surgery to treatment of musculoskeletal injuries. The medical staff sees patients from birth to 99 not only at the office but also in the hospital, in nursing facilities and at family residences in the local neighborhood. With a staff of one physician, two full-time medical assistants, an office manager and a part-time billing person, the Bernacki practice sees 125 to 150 patients a week.

Dr. Bernard J. Bernacki DO, MPH, with a degree in Osteopathic medicine, started the practice in 1987. It has grown into a comprehensive primary care organization with a holistic approach. "Today there are two major challenges facing the practice," states Dr. Bernacki. "These are shrinking reimbursements and increasing costs. Of particular concern is the insurance industry's control over payments, and our costs for malpractice insurance and health insurance for our staff."

In the early 2000s, Dr. Bernacki realized that the billing and practice management software they were using needed to be improved and upgraded. However, upgrading with their current vendor required learning an entirely new system. In addition, the vendor was not providing adequate local support. Dr. Bernacki decided to make a full transition. He wanted one system which would handle all of the needs for the practice. He chose MEDENT Practice Management and EMR from Community Computer Service.

## Solution

In March, 2003, the Bernacki practice began using MEDENT Practice Management. By fall, they initiated use of EMR. The practice continued to use their existing workstations and added two laptops, which enabled them to transit vital signs and chief complaint data directly into the patient

record.

The practice submits insurance claims electronically and uses Community Computer's service to create and mail patient statements. They use the Lab Results Clearinghouse, and lab results from their lab, Quest, go directly into patient charts.

The Bernacki practice has gradually increased what is documented in real time during the patient visit. Early on, a physician assistant would take vital signs and enter the chief complaint, and Dr. Bernacki would dictate notes after the patient visit. "We are transitioning to increased use of the point and click DocGens technology and completing more of the documentation while with the patient," describes Dr. Bernacki. "This includes entering the diagnosis and treatment plan and using check-offs for the action plan such as faxing prescriptions and generating lab and x-ray requisitions."

In the last couple of months, the practice has begun to transition to the new MEDENT Disease Management/Health Management (DM/HM) formulas. They've designed some formulas of their own and set up a number of alerts for specific diseases. "The DM/HM is really state of the art," comments Dr. Bernacki. "It offers great potential for improving the quality of care for major chronic diseases and allows us to generate our own real time database, as opposed to insurance-produced claims based information."

"I'm active in the American Osteopathic Association which has come out with the national quality improvement initiative, Clinical Assessment Program (CAP), which is very similar to the DM/HM program in MEDENT," explains Dr. Bernacki. "The MEDENT software and CAP are a perfect fit for our practice goal of taking full responsibility for developing and reviewing data on patient quality."

"My overall experience with Community Computer has been strongly positive," states Dr. Bernacki. "I think the design of the MEDENT system is very good, and I'm pleased with the strong commitment to continue to improve the product. I have good rapport with Community Computer staff and management, and they have welcomed my feedback."

## Benefits

Organization of the MEDENT medical chart has enabled the Bernacki practice to be more efficient and productive because it enables fast and easy access to key patient information. The practice has been able to serve more patients, reduce costs and speed-up and increase collections. Information about the patient is easy to see. Recent lab results, old notes and communication from others are all readily accessible.

Dr. Bernacki believes they have become more efficient and productive in handling patient contact, and they've been able to serve many more patients. "When a patient calls with a concern or requests a prescription, staff can triage medical questions. And it's possible to delegate better," explains Dr. Bernacki. "Staff can research more before physician decision-making is required. They don't have to spend time getting charts for me because the entire practice is accessible right from the workstation or laptop."

The Bernacki practice has been able to reduce costs. For example, prior to MEDENT, they needed a full-time billing person. Now the billing person needs to work only half-time.

They have been able to speed-up and increase collections. "Increased collections is one of the key advantages of the tight integration of the MEDENT system," states Dr. Bernacki. "The ability to document the diagnosis and procedures performed and communicate it to the financial end is essential. We are able to capture all that is needed for a clean claim." Terri Ledonne, office manager for the practice, adds, "With MEDENT, billing goes out daily and turnaround is faster. With one insurance company, turnaround took 30-45 days and now it takes only nine."

Dr. Bernacki is engaged in discussions with a major insurance company in his area to influence how the insurer reviews and rewards clinical quality. Capitation pre-payment vs. fee-for-service is an area of focus because Dr. Bernacki believes that the time, energy and value involved in activities which are not currently reimbursed (such as telephone contact) need to be recognized. Dr. Bernacki has provided the insurer with clinically-based information to show what his practice has been able to do for his patients.

Dr. Bernacki summarizes, "In the future, we expect to save more time and be able to manage each disease state and each patient's care more efficiently and effectively."