

Information is Legible and Accessible, and the System is Easy to Use

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Setting up a new pediatric practice, the Benardots knew they wanted to be as paperless as possible. They wanted a total package, including scheduling, billing and patient records. MEDENT Practice Management and EMR from Community Computer Service was more user friendly and less expensive than the competition. MEDENT's seamless integration and ease of use have enabled Benardot Pediatrics to save time and simplify processes such as billing. All information is legible and in one place, accessible to any member of the staff who needs it.

Situation

Benardot Pediatrics has been in existence for only a year, but already demand exceeds the hours in the day of their providers, and they need to hire an additional nurse. Located in Malone, New York, the practice provides pediatric care, including well visits and immunizations, to patients from birth to age 22. Founded by Dr. Emile and Melissa Benardot, Benardot Pediatrics sees approximately 135 patients a week with one physician, one nurse, an office manager and two office staff.

Issues of concern to the Benardots include providing good telephone triage and seeing patients in a timely manner. They try to avoid long delays between requests for appointments and the time one of their providers is able to see the patient. Also, they work to ensure that patients are seen promptly when they arrive. One of the biggest challenges the practice has faced occurred in mid summer of 2004 when a local pediatrician left the area. Benardot Pediatrics was flooded with calls from parents requesting appointments for their children, many of whom needed school physicals before the first day of school.

Prior to setting up the practice, the Benardots knew they wanted to be as paperless as possible. They wanted a total package, including scheduling, billing and patient records. "One of the packages we looked at hadn't yet implemented electronic medical records," describes Melissa Benardot, who serves as both office manager and nurse. "Another offered the functionality we wanted but was confusing and expensive. We chose MEDENT from Community Computer because it was a total system. It was user friendly and not as expensive."

Solution

The Benardots began using MEDENT Practice Management and Electronic Medical Records (EMR) a couple of weeks before they opened the practice. They hired a receptionist who had some computer experience but no medical background and a nurse who had medical background but no computer experience. All found the MEDENT system very easy to learn.

Along with the software, the Benardots purchased a server, two desktop PCs, two wireless laptops, a regular scanner, a small scanner for insurance cards and a printer. Later they got another PC and a digital camera which they use to take photos of patients and to record conditions such as a rash. They have found backing up the server very easy. They back it up to a cartridge tape every night and store it offsite. "This gives us the peace of mind that if there were a disaster, we would never need to re-create more than one day's work," explains Melissa.

Benardot Pediatrics uses Community Computer's Electronic Patient Statements service for creation and mailing of patient bills. All insurance claims that can be submitted electronically are sent via modem. The few that require paper are printed out from the MEDENT system. Dr. Benardot uses the Point and Click DocGens technology and the Medical Content Library tailored for pediatric practices. Staff scan in documents that arrive in paper form. Also, since Benardot Pediatrics has legal custody of the paper charts of the pediatrician who left the area, if a patient wants a copy of their record, the practice has to manually make a copy of the chart. "We've had a taste of what paper charts are like," states Melissa, "and we don't like it."

The Benardots have found it easy to set security levels and meet HIPAA regulations. Security is set from a menu and can be set by module or by various categories within a module. "Our receptionist is able to place photos of patients in the medical record but does not have access to the patient's family history," explains Melissa. "In a small town we believe it's important to protect the confidentiality of patients."

"The support from Community Computer has been very good and our overall experience has been wonderful," comments Melissa. "Community Computer provided excellent training. For example, the trainer not only explained how to get billing information into the computer. He was very knowledgeable about all aspects of billing." Typically when Benardot Pediatrics has contacted Community Computer, it's because they have a question. "Within five to ten minutes we usually get a call back," states Melissa, "and the support person immediately understands the question because they use the MEDENT system internally themselves."

"With MEDENT, we've had no major glitches unlike some practices in the area who are using other systems," explains Melissa. "One practice using EMR ran out of storage space. Another had an adjustment made to their billing system and they ended up locked out of the system for an entire day and had to go to paper."

Benefits

The MEDENT system has had a major impact on Benardot Pediatrics in that all information is legible and in one place, accessible to any member of the staff who needs it. Triage calls and who writes what is documented in the patient record. The seamless integration of the MEDENT modules and its ease of use have saved time and significantly simplified various processes.

"MEDENT truly feels like it's one system," states Melissa. "It's easy to get to another module from anywhere in the system." If someone is doing billing and they need additional information about the service code, they can click for the related patient information. If there's a cancellation, it's immediately visible on the providers' wireless laptops.

At Benardot Pediatrics billing is easy. When a medical procedure is completed, the nurse or doctor pulls in the correct code and clicks a button which puts the information in the billing module. Before dialing up to send the bills, they do a quick check and the system lists any errors such as a missing code. The practice has found scheduling and running reports easy as well. “One pediatric practice who came to see our system wanted to know how they could get a list of patients on Zyrtec,” states Melissa. “We were able to get a list of patients in less than five minutes.”