

## Case study

# Louis A. Buzzeo, M.D.

From a single location in Sleepy Hollow, New York, the Louis A. Buzzeo practice sees an average of 60 patients a week and also serves patients at the local hospital and dialysis center. Staffed by Dr. Buzzeo and his wife Celeste, a nurse who also handles all administration, the practice provides general internal medicine and nephrology services, with an emphasis on hypertension. The median age of the population served is 70. Patients range in age from 20 to 95.

“With MEDENT EMR, we are taking better care of patients,” states Dr. Louis Buzzeo, M.D. “I do more thorough notes and we communicate better with patients. We have focused extensively on the Clinical Visit Summary because of its value to our elderly patients. Printed directly from the patient’s chart in clear, concise language, it lists their medicines and my recommendations. It helps motivate the patient to take responsibility for follow-through in a way my hand-written notes never did. Another positive is that thorough notes enable us to bill at higher levels.”

### CHALLENGES

Dr. Buzzeo founded the practice in Manhattan in 1978 and moved it to Sleepy Hollow in 1988. Having used paper charts for 33 years, in 2012 Dr. Buzzeo and his wife decided it was time to look for an EMR. They sought greater efficiency and were drawn by the incentives offered by the government.

### SOLUTION

In July, 2012, the Buzzeo practice implemented MEDENT Practice Management and EMR from Community Computer Service.

“In MEDENT, Meaningful Use tracks our progress and enables us to get reimbursement. We feel very confident with it moving forward.”

Celeste Buzzeo, R.N. & Practice Administrator  
Louis A. Buzzeo, M.D.

The Buzzeos were very pleased with the way Community Computer planned the phase-in of MEDENT, focusing first on ensuring Celeste was able to keep claims going. There was no downtime or loss of income. "MEDENT becomes a clearing house for all claims," explains Celeste, "in that it ensures they are really clean. This means there are fewer rejections which has become noticeable over time. Less time need be spent on resubmissions, and there are fewer delayed or refused claims."

Currently the Buzzeo practice gets lab results electronically from one of their labs, and in the future their largest lab, the hospital, will also provide results electronically through the Lab Results Clearinghouse. Dr. Buzzeo uses a combination of point and click and the Dragon speech recognition system to document patient visits. Before EMR, Dr. Buzzeo dictated his notes and it would take 48 to 72 hours to get the note back. There was considerable lag in getting a consultation note back to another physician. With EMR, the note is sent the same day the consultation occurred.

"I've used e-prescribing and the drug-drug and drug-allergy interaction capability in MEDENT right from the beginning," states Dr. Buzzeo. "We use some Disease Management pop-ups and reminders such as those for chronic kidney disease and expect to use more in the future."

The practice is doing Meaningful Use and has focused extensively on the Clinical Visit Summary (CVS) because of its value to their patients. "I love the way Meaningful Use is in the MEDENT system," states Celeste. "It tracks our progress and enables us to get reimbursement. It's a very logical system and the support is wonderful. We've wanted to put our emphasis where there's patient reward, and the doctor's note achieves this. The CVS is highly effective with our population. With the elderly there are so many factors in their care. Getting the medicine right and encouraging the patient to be responsible for taking the right doses is critical." Dr. Buzzeo adds that the CVS improves communication with patients and that patients often put the med list in their wallet so they have it with them if they consult with another doctor or end up in the E.R.

Celeste explains that they have an elderly hypertensive patient who relied on his wife to check his blood pressure. "His medicines had been changed. I went over the changes with him and encouraged him to take his own blood pressure. I gave him a CVS listing all of his medications, together with Dr. Buzzeo's recommendations for periodic blood pressure checks and the level at which he should call the office. The man began to take responsibility. One evening at 5 p.m. he called the office reporting blood pressure of 210, a level which can produce a stroke and at which a patient typically needs to go to the E.R. I advised the man to take his blood pressure again in ten minutes and it had dropped to 195. Dr. Buzzeo prescribed a medication to reduce the blood pressure level, and by then the man was calm enough to pick up the prescription. Stroke was avoided, the man was not exposed to others who are sick in the E.R. and Medicare was not charged for the cost of an E.R. visit."

Dr. Buzzeo spends lots of time with each patient, seeing 10 to 12 patients a day, with about 70 percent of his practice on Medicare. Prior to EMR, his notes didn't reflect all of the care he gave patients. "While providing level 4 and 5 care, I only had time to hand write a level 3 note," explains Dr. Buzzeo. "Now with EMR,

especially with use of Dragon, my more thorough notes document and support the appropriate level of service that was provided. I reluctantly document while with the patient. When I document during the visit, I put the tablet on my lap so that I can face the patient and maintain eye contact. I often show patients lab results or other information on the screen.” Celeste comments that patients have never complained about the computer. She continues, “Patients have been impressed that he, at 65, is on the computer. And they seem to love that Dr. Buzzeeo incorporates the computer into his communication with them.”

“Community Computer is an intelligent company that is continuously looking at ways to improve the software,” states Dr. Buzzeeo. Celeste adds that the training has been very much hands-on and excellent. “We know of other practices that have invested large sums and then had to move to another vendor,” explains Celeste. “We feel very secure with MEDENT and confident they’ll have what we need for continued success with Meaningful Use.”

## RESULTS

Dr. and Celeste Buzzeeo believe that with MEDENT EMR the practice has improved the thoroughness of documentation, strengthened communication with patients and improved patient care. Because of the MEDENT software, rejection of claims is much lower, the practice is able to get reimbursed for the level of services provided and receive Medicare incentive payments.

In the future Dr. Buzzeeo would like to do more with flowsheets and Disease Management as well as implement a Patient Portal. “EMR is not a six-month project but a continuous process which I expect will become more and more positive over time,” concludes Dr. Buzzeeo.