

## Case study Buffalo Heart Group, LLP

Providing cardiology and cardiovascular consultation services to over 14,000 patients in over 46,000 service encounters annually, Buffalo Heart Group places high value on integration and communication. Located in Buffalo, New York, thirteen physicians and six mid-level providers serve patients at three offices and five hospitals.

"Our growth has been fueled by technology," states Bradley Hall, Director of Administration at Buffalo Heart Group. "We've achieved integration across all layers of the practice. Our providers are able to access patient records from home and at the hospital. We've become more efficient and provide better patient care. Many groups struggle to transition to EMR. For us, EMR has exceeded our expectations."

### CHALLENGES

Founded in 1987 by Dr. A.R. Zaki Masud, Buffalo Heart Group learned in 2000 that their practice management software vendor was going out of business. Having to quickly select a new vendor, they knew they needed not only practice management but also an EMR to help them become more efficient and to enable the integration necessary to grow the practice.

### SOLUTION

Buffalo Heart Group selected MEDENT Practice Management and EMR from Community Computer Service. The software was CCHIT Certified<sup>SM</sup> in 2006-2008.

**"Our ECG equipment is interfaced directly with MEDENT, making results instantly available to providers in the patient's chart."**

Kathy Heary, Health Information Manager/Privacy Officer  
Buffalo Heart Group

Buffalo Heart Group implemented MEDENT Practice Management in 2001 and began implementing EMR in 2003. By 2004 they were fully up and running. The practice uses MEDENT to create and print patient statements, and claims are submitted electronically. Billing staff no longer need to sit next to the medical records people to do their job since they can secure the information directly from the electronic chart from anywhere.

Buffalo Heart Group uses the Lab Results Clearinghouse. They have lab interfaces to two different facilities. Providers use MEDENT's graphing capabilities to monitor selected patients' lab results such as those for PT/INR, a lab test used to track the efficacy of anticoagulation therapy. The practice uses MEDENT templates and the point and click technology as well as a Medical Content Library tailored for a cardiology practice. They routinely use e-prescribing and have used the Medication Recall Reporting capability in MEDENT on a number of occasions to learn which patients were on certain meds.

Since 2007, Buffalo Heart Group has used Midmark ECG medical equipment which interfaces directly with MEDENT, making ECG results instantly available to providers in the patient's chart. "There's no delay in getting the results," states Kathy Heary, "and no need to scan results into the system." Brad Hall explains that in the future they also plan to directly interface their stress test and holter monitor equipment directly to MEDENT.

"We rate our overall experience with Community Computer as excellent," states Brad. "The Community Computer people are very knowledgeable and excited about what they do. They are very customer driven. I've established high quality standards for my organization and I often challenge business partners to go the extra mile to try and exceed our expectations. My experience working with Community Computer over the past seven years has been highly favorable."

"In 2001 I knew I was making one of the most important decisions in my career," explains Brad. "I hear so many horror stories of practices that have failed because of a poor practice management system. Often there is finger pointing between vendors and the customer is left holding the bag. I'm so pleased today that my research in 2001 led me to choose Community Computer."

## RESULTS

MEDENT has enabled Buffalo Heart Group to increase operational efficiency, increase their number of service locations and expand the overall number of patient encounters. As a result, Buffalo Heart Group has become more integrated. Providers now have access to patient records from any of their three office locations as well as from home and from any of the five hospitals they serve.

Communication has improved, patient care is better, productivity is higher and costs have decreased in such areas as transcription. "Had we not implemented an integrated product," states Brad, "we would have had to increase staff beyond the number of providers we've added to serve our additional patients."

As they look to the future, Buffalo Heart Group has two major projects underway. The combination template and voice recognition project, which is about 50 percent complete, is expected to streamline and facilitate documentation of the patient encounter and result in additional reduction in costs.

The preventative, evidence-based medicine project which will use MEDENT's Disease Management formulas and outcome tracking reports will enable Buffalo Heart Group to use the information they've collected on patients and put it to use to improve patient care. "We plan to create prompts to remind our providers of key treatment guidelines and to implement procedures to more effectively track outcomes," explains Brad. "This will enable our team to do more in the way of preventative medicine as well as improve the quality of patient care and help the bottom line."

"CCHIT<sup>SM</sup>" and "CCHIT Certified<sup>SM</sup>" are service marks of the Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology.

