

There's No Staff in the Office, but More Patients Are Being Seen

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When the Cilips decided to implement MEDENT Practice Management and EMR from Community Computer Service, they never imagined not only eliminating their contract billing agency but also functioning efficiently without their three employees. In addition, Dr. Cilip is seeing 25 percent more patients and spending 30 percent more time with patients. Efficiency has increased dramatically and patient records are organized and up-to-date. Some processes which formerly took 30 minutes, now take 30 seconds. Plus, Dr. Cilip feels well-prepared for future pay-for-performance guidelines.

Situation

In 1987, Dr. Michael Cilip opened his practice in Elmira, New York. The practice provides general internal medicine to adults age 18 and over. Dr. Cilip sees approximately 200 patients a week. He provides all clinical services and his wife Shelly, office manager, does everything on the business side. "The biggest challenge facing the practice is the volume of patients," explains Dr. Cilip. "Demand is high, and it's hard to fit in all the patients who need to be seen."

Until 2006, Dr. Cilip used a contract agency for billing. He had paper charts and did patient notes using a voice recognition program. Having concluded the billing agency was not as aggressive as they could be in collecting from insurance companies, Dr. Cilip decided to purchase an in-house billing system. "The hospital and many practices in the area were beginning to use the Mysis Program," states Dr. Cilip. "I decided to get in on the ground floor. However, as a one-physician practice, I couldn't get the salesperson to return my call." In frustration, Dr. Cilip decided to explore other systems. Also, he learned that the Mysis Program was falling short of expectations.

One of the systems Dr. Cilip explored was MEDENT Practice Management and EMR from Community Computer Service. When the MEDENT salesperson came and began to show him the MEDENT system using a standard patient record, Dr. Cilip asked to try it himself. "I was amazed at how intuitive the system was, even without formal training," explains Dr. Cilip, "and I quickly concluded that the EMR is pretty slick. I hadn't been in a hurry to use EMR, but when I saw MEDENT EMR, it was mind boggling."

Solution

In May, 2006, the Cilip practice began using MEDENT Practice Management and shortly thereafter the EMR. They added a server, a tablet computer and a PC for the reception area. Today they submit insurance claims electronically and use the point & click DocGens technology. The practice uses document scanning, image storage and the MEDENT voice recording system with speech

recognition

At the time MEDENT was implemented, Dr. Cilip had three full-time staff: a clinical assistant, a nurse and a receptionist. As staff left, Dr. Cilip did not replace them. He found that with MEDENT, he and his wife were able to manage the practice and serve patients without additional staff.

Dr. Cilip does most of his patient documentation while with patients. If the problem is complex, he may use MEDENT's voice recognition system to create it during the visit or later in the day. Dr. Cilip describes, "If a patient requires a letter, I may dictate the letter immediately, proof it, and print it out so that the patient can take the letter with them as they go out the door." At the end of the day, Dr. Cilip does a quick review of his notes and may add additional notes. "While I've always done OK with patient notes and with audits by insurance companies, I was never proud of my paper charts. I like the fact that with MEDENT everything is always organized."

"Before MEDENT, if there was a request for a chart, it would take about 30 minutes to meet the request," explains Dr. Cilip. "Staff would pull the chart, put the contents in a pile, copy the chart, review what to include and put it in the mail at a cost of several dollars postage. Now we simply select the chart from the EMR and push a button to fax the contents out via the server. What formerly took 30 minutes now takes 30 seconds."

When Dr. Cilip and physicians in the area compare experiences with their medical software, Dr. Cilip is very pleased that he chose MEDENT. Others have not been able to reduce staff, and they still have to scan in such items as lab reports from the hospital. Dr. Cilip explains, "With MEDENT, when labs come in, with a few clicks, they go to a holding tank. I review the labs, and if they're OK, I dictate a quick letter or send an e-mail to the patient. Everything is organized and up-to-date that same day."

"The MEDENT system is amazingly intuitive," exclaims Dr. Cilip, "and I've only tapped the surface of what MEDENT is capable of doing. The system is lightning fast and absolutely seamless."

"My experience with Community Computer has been fantastic," describes Dr. Cilip. "Their staff is very responsive and knowledgeable, and their trainer was a very good teacher."

Benefits

MEDENT has had a dramatic impact on the Cilip practice. Dr. Cilip no longer needs his three employees or the contract billing company. He is seeing more patients and spending more time with them. The practice is more efficient and information in the patient record is better organized.

The time it takes to stay organized is significantly less. The reduction in staff saves at least \$150,000 a year. Dr. Cilip is out at 5:00, caught up, with all patient visits documented. He is able to see 25 percent more patients and spend 30 percent more time with patients. There is no waiting time to get appointments and no wait in the exam room.

"Documenting patient visits is so much easier and the quality is much better," explains Dr. Cilip.

While he has not changed the level at which he bills, Dr. Cilip finds that an office visit which qualified as a level 3 visit based on documentation before EMR, now qualifies as a level 5.

“If the MEDENT salesperson had told me that I would be able to run my office without staff, eliminate the contract billing company, see 25 percent more patients and spend 30 percent more time with them, I would not have believed it, and probably would have told him to leave,” states Dr. Cilip. “My experience has been phenomenal. Threat of cutbacks in reimbursements by insurance companies and Medicare no longer alarm me, and as pay-for-performance gets more steam behind it, I’m confident and well-prepared.”