

Case study

Hamilton Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine

Hamilton Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine provides orthopedic surgery, sports medicine and physical therapy to approximately 600 patients a week. Located in Hamilton, New York, the practice has five full-time and one part-time physician, five physicians' assistants and five nurses. Total staff numbers 42.

“We were entirely paperless within nine months of implementing EMR,” states Patricia Brown, Hamilton Orthopedics' Practice Manager. “Also, continuity of care is 100 percent improved. Patients have more faith in the practice because every practitioner has immediate access to patient information and knows what another provider has done. Providers are better informed so in turn patients receive better care. We're much more efficient and productive, and documentation is more thorough with EMR.”

CHALLENGES

Founded in 1984 by Dr. Ivan Howan, Hamilton Orthopedics knew by the late 1990's that it wanted to become paperless. The Healthcare Data Systems' software the practice used for billing wasn't keeping pace with mandated changes, and many billing tasks still had to be done manually. Hamilton Orthopedics began looking for new software which would provide integrated practice management and EMR.

SOLUTION

Hamilton Orthopedics selected MEDENT Practice Management and EMR from Community Computer Service. The software was CCHIT CertifiedSM in 2006 and 2007.

“Practitioners are much more productive than before we had EMR. They're able to see twice as many patients, yet be out of the office by 5:00 vs. 7:00 or 8:00.”

Patrician Brown, Practice Manager
Hamilton Orthopedic Surgery and Sports
Medicine

Hamilton Orthopedics implemented MEDENT in 2000. Within nine months they were fully paperless. There is a laptop in every exam room, enabling practitioners to easily view patients' lab results and information while with a patient. Using the laptop, nurses complete or update the patient's history prior to the exam. A doctor or a physicians' assistant then sees the patient and documents the visit using templates customized for each practitioner. Documentation is much more thorough than before EMR.

The practice uses Community Computer's Electronic Patient Statements Service for the creation and mailing of patient statements, and they submit claims electronically. "Lab results are received from the local hospital, reviewed and entered electronically into the patient's chart," explains Patricia Brown. "If anything is abnormal, the doctor is alerted. X-ray results are transmitted directly to our Synapse software. Without needing to exit MEDENT and pull up Synapse, practitioners can click to see the patient's x-ray."

"We use e-prescribing," states Patricia, "and it's highly efficient. There's no chasing around for signatures or searching for patient charts. Any medication prescribed is listed in the patient's record. Because we typically prescribe the same 25 medications, MEDENT's Drug-Drug interaction alerts seldom pop up but do occasionally when a patient is on medications prescribed by a physician in another practice."

Patricia describes continuity of care at Hamilton Orthopedics as 100 percent improved. "Every practitioner knows what another provider has done and can look at the patient's history since everything is in the patient chart. If a patient calls, information is put in Triage and sent to a nurse. The nurse can see items such as what meds the patient is on, the doctor's diagnosis when last seen and whether the problem is new or ongoing. Patients have more faith in the practice because all of the practitioners can quickly learn the patient's status and history. Patients don't have to wait hours for someone to search a paper chart and call them back. Being able to immediately get to patient information definitely improves the quality of care."

From the time they started using MEDENT, the practice has sped-up and increased collections. "For example, we were immediately able to switch to direct billing of Medicare and Medicaid instead of sending in a tape," describes Patricia, "and when audited by Medicare, we no longer have to send in additional information. Practitioners fill in the Medicare-specific forms provided in the MEDENT software and all that is required by Medicare is there."

"Our overall experience with Community Computer has been excellent," states Patricia. "Community Computer goes out of its way to do whatever they can do to make the system more efficient. Also, it's totally important that we can make one phone call for any problem, whether it be hardware, software or networking. I would never want to change that."

RESULTS

The most significant way MEDENT has impacted Hamilton Orthopedics is that there are no paper charts. All information is in the electronic patient record and immediately accessible. Documentation is more thorough, and patient satisfaction and quality of care have improved.

Administrative staff are much more efficient. They no longer spend time searching for paper charts or scanning in information such as x-rays or lab results. Practitioners are more productive. They are able to see twice as many patients while spending less time at the end of the day documenting patient visits.

