

Urology of San Antonio Realizes a Dramatic Return on Investment with EHR Solution

At a Glance

Organization

- Urology of San Antonio
San Antonio, Texas
- 18 physicians
 - Six clinical offices
 - One surgery center
 - Centralized business office

Solution Spotlight

- Practice Partner® Patient Records
- Practice Partner® Appointment Scheduler
- Practice Partner® Medical Billing

Critical Issues

- Maintaining and improving profitability
- Reducing costs associated with paper charts and paper-driven processes
- Improving coding accuracy
- Enhancing clinical efficiency, patient care and service

Results

- \$150,000 annual savings in transcription costs
- \$144,000 annual savings in labor costs
- \$40,000 annual savings in paper supplies costs
- \$360,000 annual revenue increase resulting from coding efficiencies
- Increased daily visits

With revenues hitting a plateau, Urology of San Antonio boldly implemented an electronic health record (EHR) and practice management system. As a result, the practice increased revenue by raising patient throughput, captured missed charges by optimizing medical coding, and cut costs drastically by eliminating paper processes and reliance on transcription services. Urology of San Antonio broke even on its investment 10 months after go-live and improved its financial outlook and quality of patient care.

Challenge

When the physicians of Urology of San Antonio met to discuss their practice's future financial status, they concluded that they needed to cut costs and enhance existing revenue streams to maintain or improve profitability. The practice decided to meet this goal by implementing an EHR solution. Although a significant investment in human and financial capital would be required, the group realized that an EHR system would boost productivity and yield positive long-term financial benefits.

Answer

After evaluating EHR packages from several vendors, Urology of San Antonio chose an integrated EHR and practice management system — McKesson's Practice Partner® system, featuring Practice Partner® Patient Records, Practice Partner® Appointment Scheduler and Practice

Partner® Medical Billing modules. (Practice Partner version 9.2 from McKesson is a CCHIT CertifiedSM product for CCHIT Ambulatory EHR 2006 and 2007.) "The Practice Partner system has the power and flexibility necessary to accommodate our multisite clinic and a proven track record of installations in offices similar to ours," explains COO Michael Dermer.

The clinic chose a phased implementation and devoted almost five months to system planning and installation. Initially, the group went live with the Practice Partner Patient Records application, using one site as a trial. The 17 remaining offices followed suit a month later.

The physicians and staff at Urology of San Antonio first worked to train users and to create Practice Partner Patient Records customized templates. The group steadily became proficient using the software.

Results

Urology of San Antonio quickly experienced the benefits of its investment. "After the first three to four months, we were seeing a substantial and consistent increase in patients — without compromising our quality of care," notes Dr. Clayton Hudnall, lead physician.

The Practice Partner EHR system helps to significantly improve the ease and completeness of patient

Case Study

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Dr. Clayton Hudnall
Lead Physician
Urology of San Antonio

visit documentation, which in turn positively affects Urology of San Antonio’s top-line revenue. Physicians use progress note templates to easily and quickly record all aspects of patients’ visits, enabling more accurate coding and boosting revenue by an additional \$360,000 per year.

Additionally, all patient charts are now accessible from any workstation, laptop or tablet PC — whether remote or onsite. Physicians and staff no longer have to worry about transferring patient records among locations or hunting down patients’ paper files.

Prior to implementing Practice Partner Patient Records, Urology of San Antonio was spending \$14,000 per month on transcription and waiting two weeks to receive the information. Now, the majority of the physicians enter data directly into the Practice Partner Patient Records system, lowering transcription costs to \$1,500 per month, an annual cost savings of \$150,000.

After completing its Practice Partner EHR implementation, Urology of San Antonio added the Practice Partner billing and scheduling modules to create a fully integrated system and gain additional productivity improvements. Now, the superbill is sent electronically from Practice Partner Patient Records to Medical Billing, helping to speed and reduce

the labor required to manage the billing process.

Since the scheduling module links directly to Medical Billing and Patient Records, schedulers know when to contact patients for insured preventive care treatments. With streamlined scheduling across facilities, the practice reduces missed and canceled appointments, automatically prints patient reminder cards and spends less time scheduling patients.

With the productivity gains resulting from the integrated Practice Partner system, Urology of San Antonio reduced the FTEs required for each provider, saving \$144,000 annually in labor costs. Additionally, the elimination of paper charts yields \$40,000 in annual savings in clerical and mailing supplies. “We are thrilled to eliminate the hassles of paper supplies and mailings,” notes Dr. Hudnall. “Now we can fax directly from the Practice Partner system without ever having to stuff another envelope.”

As validation of its success, Urology of San Antonio was named Practice of the Year in the Financial Category by Physicians Practice less than one year after implementation. The group anticipates its investment in Practice Partner will produce net returns of \$530,000 in each of the next three years.

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