

## MedPeds

### The Challenge

MedPeds, a private practice of eight providers and 23 employees, situated in Laurel, Maryland, understood its current paper-based system had become a detriment to its overall functionality. By implementing an efficient electronic health record (EHR), the practice anticipates cost cutting initiatives, improved quality of patient care, and better positioning for the practice now and for the future.

### The Solution

eClinicalWorks' comprehensive EHR solution was selected because it best suited its needs as a primary care practice and would improve overall functionality. Since then, the practice has seen improvement in clinical documentation, providing the ability to follow-up with efficient care for all patients.

### The Results

After implementing eClinicalWorks, MedPeds improved both efficiency and the ability to enhance care. MedPeds also won the 2013 Ambulatory HIMSS Davies Award of Excellence for achieving exemplary implementation and utilization of an EHR.

### Practice Overview

MedPeds, a private practice of eight providers and 23 employees, situated in the Washington, D.C., suburb of Laurel, Maryland, has delivered outpatient services to approximately 6,000 patients over the past year. Founded in 1982, the practice is committed to providing the highest quality of healthcare, compassion, and technology for a healthier patient; the majority of whom are either under the age of 18 or over the age of 64, and include various ethnic and socioeconomic groups. By implementing an efficient electronic health record (EHR), the practice anticipates cost saving initiatives, the ability to locate patient charts, and making care delivery more convenient and efficient. Recently, MedPeds was awarded with the 2013 Ambulatory HIMSS Davies Award of Excellence for achieving exemplary implementation and utilization of an EHR in an independent ambulatory care practice. MedPeds becomes the 10th eClinicalWorks customer to have received this honor.

**"It's been a good experience. Nothing can match the access and availability of the EHR from home and the office, with the ability to review charts with patients in a time appropriate manner."**

Dr. Rema Jalali, MedPeds Provider

### EHR Selection

In 2004, the practice agonized over lost charts, frustrated providers, and unacceptable gaps in quality of care. Providers and staff understood that in order to correct these issues, MedPeds needed to adopt an EHR. As a result, the practice began the difficult process of selecting a vendor with the goals of reducing staffing costs, improving the ability to find patient charts when needed, improving the quality of patient care, and competitively position the practice for the future. In addition, the practice anticipated improvement in clinical documentation, improving patient follow-up, improving efficiency of care for all patients, reducing scheduling and billing errors, improving collection of patient demographics, and enhancing communication between the patients and providers.

After an in-depth evaluation, based on the previously mentioned criteria, the practice determined eClinicalWorks comprehensive EHR best suited its needs as a primary care practice for improving overall functionality at the point-of-care.

## **Implementation**

Highly focused on eliminating all opportunities to revert to paper records, MedPeds paid a third party \$50,000 to scan all active paper charts. This approach yielded a significant and positive cultural shift within the practice, producing a technically efficient system conversion and completely eliminated any tendency to resist the change to EHR and rely on paper charts. For the first two weeks of implementation, only urgent care appointments were scheduled. Staff and physicians quickly learned to use eClinicalWorks thanks to its intuitively designed layout and features. Eight weeks after implementation, MedPeds returned to normal operations.

## **Enhanced Practice**

The comprehensive EHR has helped to improve both efficiency and the ability to enhance care. Providers and staff are aided by the tools to boost communication between the physician office and patients. The technology even gives patients the flexibility to ask specific questions regarding their health and access 24x7 to medical information.

To further enhance the practice, MedPeds has been using the built-in Registry and Quality Measure reporting tool to gather and develop value measures to improve patient care. The Registry, with the power of population management helps the practice reach nearly all patients electronically through the patient portal, and by SMS text messaging. In many ways the tool is a game changer for primary care, allowing practices to select a clinical condition, such as a patients who have not had their flu shot, or to reach patients using a drug, which has newly recognized side effects. Overall, the stakeholders have the information to make informed choices, improve treatment outcomes, promote overall wellness, and reduce costs.

Since 2012, MedPeds has been part of the Health Information Exchange (HIE) for the state of Maryland, automatically sending medical summaries, including medications and allergies, through eClinicalWorks eEHX. Currently, the state of Maryland is revamping its HIE and is not using the information MedPeds sends to the exchange.

## **Patient Involvement**

Adopting the Patient Portal in 2006, MedPeds quickly understood the value of providing a secure communication channel between the practice and the patient. Marketing initiatives, including placing signage throughout the waiting room, were aimed at increasing portal adoption by encouraging patients to be proactive in the management of their own health. In addition, staff created portal accounts as part of their workflow, which significantly increased usage. Seven years later, more than 90% of patients have a portal account and over 50%



use it on a daily basis. Patients love having access to their records, allowing them to view lab results, request refills and educational material, or simply ask general questions.



To simplify communication of routine information and alerts, administrative staff developed message macros. For abnormal results, the message would request patients to contact the practice for detailed information. MedPeds has also automated telephone messages and SMS (text) messages to patients for appointment reminders, notification of “no-shows” and to inform patients as soon as a prescription has been sent to the pharmacy. In turn, engagement has since increased as patients are requesting referrals or prescription refills, sending specific questions to their provider for reply. Overall, MedPeds has established a reliable reputation amongst patients, with the majority of satisfaction survey data proving first-rate reviews.

“I like having information available at my fingertips. The most important thing is my health. When I have a test result coming in or when I want to remember when I last had a vaccination, I can easily go into my portal to find answers.”

Heidi, MedPeds patient

### Front Office Improvements

Since implementing eClinicalWorks, MedPeds has experienced multiple front-office improvements, including:

- Seamless billing, reducing days in A/R to under 30
- Increased communication of clinical data among providers utilizing P2POpen
- eBO helping providers monitor clinical data, creating custom reports
- Enhanced patient outcomes
- Improved patient satisfaction
- Patient Portal helping patients request appointments, referrals, refills, and to view their medical records
- Ease of sending office visits or labs to specialists
- Decreased error rate with prescriptions

“Working with eClinicalWorks, it didn’t take me long to get accustomed to the EHR and understand the power of the technology, especially in regard to billing and communicating with patients,” explained Janet, the practice manager at MedPeds.

### Saving Lives

Heidi, a patient at MedPeds recently faced a terrifying situation. After getting into a serious car accident, she declined to be transported to the local ER. Instead, she asked a friend to drive her straight to MedPeds to receive urgent care for the treatment and attention she deserved. After being carefully evaluated, with all information documented into her EHR, Heidi began the long road to recovery. Almost every month following, she has returned for follow-up visits and each time the provider has evaluated her improving conditions, with the help of eClinicalWorks.

“Things I don’t even remember happening are kept in my EHR. Now,

nothing will ever get lost or overlooked,” explained Heidi.

Another wonderful instance of the technology saving a patient’s life is when a Registry outreach initiative recently alerted patients over 50 years of age who didn’t have a colonoscopy on file. MedPeds wanted to encourage these patients to schedule a colonoscopy. One patient, who immediately scheduled a colonoscopy after receiving the notification was discovered to have colon cancer, Fortunately, his was caught early enough to be successfully treated and the patient is currently in remission.

### Cloud

In 2013 MedPeds transitioned to the Cloud to further enhance the functionality of the practice. The Cloud ensures that MedPeds patient and practice data is safe, secure, and fully-accessible regardless of time, network traffic, or Mother Nature. In addition, Nimbus, an innovative system-downtime solution, keeps the practice functioning during EHR outages. Nimbus synchronizes information from the practice, enabling staff to view and update patient information through a separate, dedicated Cloud. As Nimbus is Web-based, MedPed’s schedule, patient medical summaries, and basic visit documentation functionality are easily accessed through the practice’s Internet browser. Data captured in Nimbus is then synced to the eClinicalWorks EHR when connectivity is restored and saved to the patient’s health record as a Nimbus Encounter. As a result, MedPeds can function as normal in case of an outage.

“What is really wonderful, is I was on the train yesterday visiting my daughter, and I was able to use my iPad, that is connected to our Cloud, to access messages and charts, all in real-time,” outlined Dr. Eaton. The practice manager Janet notes the additional benefits of converting to the cloud include, reducing the cost and hassle of hosting a server at the practice. “Before moving to the cloud, we had server problems at least several times a week”.



### Meaningful Use & Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH)

After reviewing the quality goals set by government programs, MedPeds was in agreement that achieving national incentives would improve patient outcomes. eClinicalWorks EHR provided the practice with the tools to meet meaningful use and PCMH standards. Since 2009, MedPeds has received certification as a Level III Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH). In addition, all of its physicians have met the quality guidelines to achieve Meaningful Use in both 2011 and 2012. The quality improvements gained from both recognitions are:

- Collection of race, language and ethnicity data
- Enhanced transition of care
- Increased mammogram and colonoscopy orders for appropriate patients
- Increased vaccinations for recommended adult and pediatric patients
- Improved productivity (reduction in patient wait time)
- Reduction of clearinghouse rejections
- Additional revenue for meeting these and other quality goals



### **Incentive Program**

“With the incentives it gives us more opportunity to deal with patient care. It has been a total team approach,” outlined Ashley, medical assistant at MedPeds.

In order to ensure MedPeds met certain quality measures, the practice instituted an incentive-based system for medical assistants, administrative staff and providers. Created to encourage staff to utilize the technology and subsequently reward them financially for their high-quality work, the program has been very popular throughout the practice. Staff always put their best foot forward trying to earn high accolades.

**“As a result of the program, we are seeing more passion from both our providers and medical assistants in conducting improved patient care.”**

Dr. Eaton, MedPeds Provider

“Our administrative employees are also helping us achieve excellence through our incentive program by ensuring patient data is entered accurately, collecting cell phone numbers so we can text patients and more. We have motivated all employees to help us keep our patients healthier and happier,” adds Janet.

### **ROI**

Since adopting its EHR, MedPeds has experienced significant financial, organizational, and cultural returns on investment (ROI). For example, the practice has saved \$1,641,017 since implementation, a 173% ROI. Other financial benefits include certification as a 2009 Level 3 PCMH (recertified in 2012), achieving Meaningful Use for all doctors in 2011 and 2012, and participating in other quality pay-for-performance measures. Overall improvement in finances provided the practice with the flexibility to renovate and relocate into a new office with more efficient workspaces, more exam rooms, a spacious waiting room, and improved work areas. Other benefits include tools allowing on-call providers access to the system anytime, from anywhere. In 2011, MedPeds also started using the Claims Rules Engine to prevent the most prevalent causes for claim denials. To monitor and catch any errors, the practice instituted rules and warnings to review and correct unclean claims before they are submitted. Implementing the rules significantly improved the selection of CPT, ICD9 and units for immunizations by delivering over \$99,000 of additional revenue for 2012, the year rules for immunization coding was first implemented.