

Internal Medicine Specialists

The Challenge

IMS, an ever expanding Gastroenterology practice, quickly realized their current paper-based PM system was too expensive and lacked the advanced functionality they expected, resulting in a continued use of paper. IMS looked to switch and implement a comprehensive EHR solution that was affordable and would replace the need for transcription.

The eClinicalWorks Solution

eClinicalWorks' comprehensive EHR solution, with unified practice management, met the needs of IMS. It provides the functionality needed to eliminate transcription and streamline front and back-office workflows.

Success

After installing eClinicalWorks after a rapid adoption, Internal Medicine Specialists now have the ability to handle scheduling easier, billing is smoother, and the need for paper and transcription services was eliminated - saving the practice over \$100,000 a year. Using the system allowed all GI doctors to attest to Meaningful Use by the end of 2011!

Internal Medicine Specialists (IMS), an 11 provider practice, located in eight locations throughout Central Florida, provides services in Gastroenterology. Their goal is to provide care, the way it once was... not as a number, but as a patient, a person, who needs help, information, and the best options laid before them. By implementing an affordable EHR, IMS anticipates an increase in staff focus on providing the up most care.

EMR Selection

While overwhelmed with an influx of paper, Internal Medicine Specialists recognized a change needed to be made and with the healthcare industry gradually gravitating towards standardization of capturing data to improve patient care the only logical solution was a comprehensive electronic health records solution. Almost immediately, IMS began an extensive search for EHRs based on three necessary features that best matched their practice needs: scheduling, billing, and affordability.

IMS's search for an electronic medical record solution began in 2004 to replace its outdated paper-based PM system and to fulfill the need for transcription services. In addition, the search revealed additional needs the practice hoped to implement:

- Reduce paper
- Increase control over patient files
- Improve patient tracking
- Manage labs, prescriptions and notes more efficiently

In 2006 Internal Medicine Specialist implemented eClinicalWorks, due to its:

- Comprehensive system (supports scheduling, billing, and the internal medical record)
- Affordability
- Being recommended by physicians in the community, as well as around the country

Dr. Steven Brint stated, “eClinicalWorks award-winning solution was chosen because as technology is advancing into the future, we wanted our EHR to grow and advance as well. We felt that eClinicalWorks provided the best opportunity to accomplish our goals.”

Implementation and data migration was rapid and very smooth. As a result, the staff and physicians swiftly adapted and learned to use eClinicalWorks due to its intuitively designed layout and features. They quickly realized the proficiency gained from the EHR. Specifically, IMS enjoyed the flexibility of the eClinicalWorks workflow process as Dr. Avanish Aggarwal explained:

“Scheduling is becoming very smooth; anyone can schedule no matter where they are. Billing has become much smoother; over the first few years our billing revenue increased. eClinicalWorks made things easier for the nurses, who don’t have to go around the office looking for charts. We got rid of all our chart racks. We are able to use that space for operators to sit.”

Implementation of a Paper-dependent Practice:

The implementation process did pose some unique challenges. For example, the office staff needed to be trained on computer functionality as many had never used a mouse or laptop previously. The outdated paper-based PM system, the practice was converting from, was based solely on function buttons.

Luckily, the eClinicalWorks’ approach to implementing and training helped to make the transition smooth and the unique challenges were quickly overcome. Once the practice was trained and became comfortable using eClinicalWorks, the office staff adapted quickly and was excited to learn more.

For the staff, eClinicalWorks solution has meant greater efficiency and time savings. The Billing Manager, Lisa Burdue, noted:

“I was in charge of implementing eClinicalWorks for all of the providers and staff, most of who have been here for a long time and were fearful of the loss of paper in hand. Once the staff realized everything was available instantly, it was a relief and they became very accepting of the eClinicalWorks solution. Staff can’t imagine going back to paper - to not having patient information accessible immediately. Billing runs smoothly, claims go quickly, and anything can be found within the system. We try not to use paper anymore. eClinicalWorks has improved the way we treat our patients and the quality of care we provide.”

Almost seven years since the implementation of eClinicalWorks, IMS has increased the overall treatment and quality of service for the patients allowing the practice to adapt into the future. The intuitive EHR eliminated the need for paper ensuring each patient receives the best care possible. Many patients want to be informed and involved in their care. With the elimination of paper charts, the clinical staff can instantly view the patient’s record online, print the information out immediately and respond to patient calls or questions for medication refills, lab results, etc., within the hour – no more searching for charts. Messages are

immediately routed to the appropriate staff, eliminating wait time and increasing patient satisfaction. The quick turnaround time on issues has had a major positive impact for patients who are anxious for a response.

Clinical and Administrative Improvements:

Detailed below are the clinical and administrative efficiencies the staff at Internal Medicine Specialists have experienced since integrating with the eClinicalWorks solution.

- Eliminated transcription services
- Rolled out Patient Portal so patients can view/modify their information and communicate with the practice
- Scheduling is easier and faster, no paperwork needed, everything is done with the click of a mouse
- Billing alert is very effective; alerts front office of anything that needs to be handled before checking in a patient
- Labs go directly into the system, eliminating the need for faxed results to be scanned
- Charts are completed the same day as visit, allowing for the notes to be sent to the patient's PCP same day
- Care is faster and more efficient

"Billing was complicated before. Now, with eClinicalWorks, it's streamlined – it's as easy as surfing the Internet."

Alicia, Billing Specialist

- Removed all chart racks; paper charts were scanned into eClinicalWorks
- Response time for patient questions is much faster as there is no paper chart to locate; the patient can be found quickly using the Patient Lookup feature within eClinicalWorks
- Telephone encounters allow the practice to quickly, easily and efficiently refill or add prescriptions, view current/old prescriptions, and send to the pharmacy through the click of a mouse
- Quality of life for staff has increased. eClinicalWorks allows staff the flexibility to work from home which has increased their productivity
- Cash flow has increased dramatically
- Clean claims are sent to insurance companies within 24 hours of a visit
- Accounts Receivable remains in the 90 day timeframe

"We implemented Patient Portal at the end of 2011 to allow for our GI doctors to meet the meaningful use standards. Patients like the portal; they are able to ask for prescription refills, view previous charts and labs, questions can be sent through portal. It helps back end staff to not have to answer so many phone calls, questions can be answered within eClinicalWorks, refill prescriptions, send messages back through the portal to let them know the task has been done. Patients can update demographic information. It's really made communication between patients and the practice much easier than playing phone tag." Joseph Tackett, IT Administrator

Return on Investment

The initial investment was for servers to host the system, Fujitsu tablets for the physicians, installation of wireless, cameras, card scanners, and regular scanners.

The practice ran on the original equipment for the first four years; then replaced the servers to transition to V9 to meet Meaningful Use.

The practice was able to eliminate its transcription costs, which were \$100,000 per year.

Return on Investment through the use of Patient Portal

In addition to the \$1,000,000 Internal Medicine Specialists saved by eliminating transcription costs, the practice saved \$132,000 per year (\$11,000 per month) through the use of the eClinicalWorks Patient Portal. Patient Portal allowed IMS to reduce costs in the following areas:

- Reduced labor and paper costs through:
 - ◇ Visit Summaries – eSummary
 - * Including patient education
 - ◇ Labs
 - ◇ Remits
 - ◇ Scheduling
- Eliminated phone calls for:
 - ◇ Scheduling
 - ◇ Reminders
 - ◇ New appointments
 - ◇ Simple inquiries

After adopting eClinicalWorks, Internal Medicine Specialists rapidly became accustomed to the comprehensive system, meaning greater efficiency and time savings. The ROI that the practice achieved over a year period is substantial. During the first 12 months the practice saved an average of \$1,133 per month in monthly supply costs, resulting in an overall savings of over \$100,000 in transcription services. During the same time, IMS saved an average of \$38,000 in results and visit summary and \$15,000 in messages and forms, both of which directly increased the overall quality of service for patients. Furthermore, the supply and labor savings have helped the practice to maintain their long-term goals of supplying an affordable EHR and providing the upmost care for its patients.

