RIGHTTIME MEDICAL CARE

WHERE URGENT CARE AND PRIMARY CARE MEET

The Challenge

Founded in 1989 to serve the need for after-hours medical care for pediatric patients, Righttime Medical Care has grown to 15 locations and more than 125 providers. The organization needed a powerful healthcare IT partner for basic documentation and Practice Management, as well as to add new tools needed to keep up with the challenges of growth in a rapidly changing healthcare landscape.

The Solution

Righttime chose eClinicalWorks because it was both the most robust and most flexible solution for its documentation needs. As Righttime has grown, eClinicalWorks has continued to meet the practice's needs — including eClinicalTouch® for mobile documentation, Kiosk and Patient Portal for more effective Patient Engagement, and the latest interoperability solutions.

The Results

Today, Righttime handles hundreds of thousands of calls and patient encounters annually, meeting both urgent care and primary care needs. Thanks to the flexibility of the tools eClinicalWorks provides, as well as flexible thinking, Righttime has secured its place at the intersection of urgent and primary care, helping meet the varied needs of today's patients in ways that fit their lifestyles, schedules, and insurance coverages.

Righttime Medical Care
Where Urgent Care and Primary Care Meet

Robert G. Graw, Jr., MD
Chief Executive Officer

Born at Night, Now Serving Every Day

When Dr. Robert G. Graw and his colleagues founded their group medical practice in Annapolis, Maryland in 1989, their goal was simple enough: Provide high-quality pediatric care to families who lacked access to their doctor or were experiencing medical emergencies on nights or weekends, throughout the year.

In January 2010, Nighttime Pediatrics got a new name — Righttime Medical Care — that better reflects its mission.

The name they chose perfectly reflected that mission: Nighttime Pediatrics.

But in the nearly 30 years since their founding, healthcare and the lifestyles and needs of the patients they serve have changed a lot. Within a decade, the practice had added two care centers and was providing urgent care services to adults, as well. Within 20 years, they had grown to six care centers, dozens of additional providers, and were opening by 11 a.m. to better accommodate patients.

In January 2010, Nighttime Pediatrics got a new name — Righttime Medical Care — that better reflects its mission.

Today, Righttime Medical Care has more than 125 providers and 15 locations, stretching from the original Annapolis office west to Frederick, and north and south to the suburbs of Baltimore and Washington, D.C. The practice's call center handles approximately 800,000 inquiries each year.

Staying True to the Mission

"When we began, there were nine local pediatricians who knew each other and we knew each other's patients and we knew each other's styles," said Dr. Graw.

Now, with 125 physicians, he said it simply isn't possible to know every other clinician's style or patients. But every member of the practice remains true to its original mission and purpose: Provide urgent and after-hours care to all in need. Encourage patients to then go back to see their primary care doctor. And, when necessary, arrange for the services of a specialist or hospitalization.

Righttime didn't set out to take patients away from other practitioners. Even today, when he's asked to speak to pediatric or family group practices, Dr. Graw said, other providers sometimes feel that his practice is taking their patients from them.

"The reality is that we're only seeing patients who can't get into their office," he said. "And what I say to them is that you need to have certain appointments available for your own patients in the morning, right? You leave slots open to see them, right? So I always say to the pediatricians who worry, 'Look, if you're there in the evening, if you're there on Saturday, if you leave those slots open, your patients will never come to see us. They're only coming because they can't get in to see you!'"

Looking ahead, Dr. Graw sees a growing need for cooperation between urgent care and primary care practices. With a growing shortfall of primary care doctors across the country, many patients simply cannot or do not get to see a doctor as soon as they would like. That means that urgent care facilities will continue to grow.

Choosing a Robust EHR Solution

As Righttime grew, its providers recognized they needed a strong healthcare IT partner.

"We looked at every other platform and we chose eClinicalWorks because we felt that it could offer the depth, the robustness to deliver care for all of our primary care patients," Dr. Graw said. "We began it in my pediatric practice, which was a large pediatric practice with 15 clinicians, and we used the desktop version and we used tablets and it was wonderful. And we said, 'Well, what if there was a mechanism to use an iPad® to deliver that care?' And that's now called eClinicalTouch®!"

The challenges of an urgent care practice included having fast and reliable access to patient records at any time of the day, and following up each appointment by ensuring that the record of the encounter at Righttime was available to the patient's primary care doctor. That meant having flexible methods for documentation and solving the problem of interoperability — sharing relevant clinical data among all providers involved in a given patient's care.

"eClinicalWorks matured with us," Dr. Graw said. "We work closely with them and develop what's needed. What's nice about it is that behind the scenes we can expand it to services in urgent care, to all of the other things that people would like to do at the workplace, like occupational health."

Focusing on Data Exchange

On one level, the patient encounters at Righttime Medical Care unfold much as they always have in countless medical offices across the nation. Patients call up and make an appointment. Some book their own appointments online. And others simply walk in to one of Righttime's 15 clinics. However they get there, patients receive the care they need.

But it is what goes on behind the scenes with data from each patient encounter that is making a real difference in healthcare quality.

Dr. Graw explained that all patient information is exchanged between Righttime and the patients' other care providers. That way, the primary care doctor can see what happened with the patient at the urgent care facility, and the urgent care is aware of whatever was done at the primary care office.

"Similarly, with the hospitals now, we've built a network so we can exchange data with Epic in our local hospital systems, and be able to see the same thing, what treatments have been done, what diagnostic studies have been done," Dr. Graw said. "They, likewise, in the morning, can see what we did to help their patients."

Dr. Graw noted that effective interoperability matters because while every patient has their records stored electronically today, the reality is that systems still do not "talk well back and forth to each other."

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eClinicalWorks is helping to close those communication gaps by allowing physicians to connect to the nationwide Carequality and CommonWell networks through On-Demand Activation, right in the EMR.

"So all of that data becomes one big database, allowing people to look at Population Health and understand how to keep people healthier," Dr. Graw said.

Righttime's Role for the Future

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"Urgent care will start doing primary care for those who can't get access," he said. "We become the collectors of their healthcare information. So it's important that we do a thorough job — it's not just that we're going to look at your eye and say it's pink and we'll give you some eye drops, right? We're trying to understand how their health is in general. And it's an opportunity, then, if we have the right tools, to collect that information longitudinally. So, when and if they decide to go somewhere, that data's all in one place for them." ■

Urgent care medicine has experienced tremendous growth across our country, with convenience, high quality, significantly lower costs of care, and enhanced access to healthcare for millions of people each year. Growth is also being stimulated by a well-documented shortage of primary care physicians. 57% of Americans report difficulty with same-day or next-day access to appointments, and 63% of patients with PCPs report difficulty with access on evenings, weekends and holidays. 22% of patients reported waiting six days or more to receive care for acute problems, according to a study from The Commonwealth Fund.

7,639
URGENT CARE CENTERS IN U.S. AS OF JUNE 2017

The industry is expected to continue to grow 5.8% annually, offering services that extend beyond those of a typical primary care office, including extended hours, and access 365 days a year.

32 x 7,639 = 89,200,000
PATIENT VISITS PER YEAR

If the average number of visits remains stable at 32, and UCAOA's database of 7,639 urgent care centers are open 365 days per year, urgent care centers are providing access and care for more than 89.2 million patient visits per year.

13% to 27%
$4,400,000,000
AVOIDABLE ER VISITS

The National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) estimates that between 13.7% and 27.1% of all emergency department visits could be treated at an urgent care site, with a potential savings of approximately $4.4 billion annually.

Source: THE URGENT CARE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
http://www.ucaoa.org