CASE STUDY

eClinicalWorks

CityMD URGENT CARE CENTERS

A MISSION TO DO MORE FOR HEALTH

improving healthcare together

eClinicalWorks

CityMD:

Healthcare with kindness — and efficiency

The Challenge

CityMD, a network of urgent care, walk-in medical clinics, needed a healthcare IT partner to help it meet the challenges of rapid growth, including comprehensive documentation and handling higher caseloads, without losing focus on dispensing high-quality care and kindness to every patient.

The Solution

EHR and Practice Management solutions from eClinicalWorks helped CityMD keep up with its patient caseloads, and fully supported the network's care coordination teams. All CityMD locations were equipped with Kiosk for convenient patient check-in and data entry.

The Results

CityMD personnel have achieved improved workflows, even as patient visits have increased. With Kiosk, wait times have been reduced by approximately 10%, translating to a savings of about 60 days of staff time annually at just one busy midtown-NYC location.

Serving Healthcare With Kindness

Ramu Kannan

For years, many people — including many medical professionals — have looked at the nation's healthcare system and wondered why things aren't better. Why do healthcare services cost what they do? Why does it seem to take so long to get the appointment you need with the provider you want? In a system that touches the most fundamental and personal part of our lives — our health — why do so many so often feel like they're on the outside looking in?

Dr. Richard Park was one of those folks who looked at the nation's healthcare system and thought that there must be a better way. Unlike most, however, Dr. Park decided to do something about it. In 2010, in association with three other doctors, he started CityMD, a network of walk-in, urgent care clinics that aim to provide "…quality medical care through convenient access and an exceptional experience."

CityMD's rapid growth is a testament to just how much others agreed with Dr. Park's belief that there had to be a better way to deliver quality care. In seven years, the company has expanded to 68 locations, each of which offers a comprehensive range of services for all ages. Most locations are in and around New York City, including northern New Jersey, while three CityMD locations recently opened in metropolitan Seattle, Washington.

"CityMD's mission is 'serving kindness,'" said Ramu Kannan, Chief Information Officer at CityMD. "In everything we do, we look at whether we are serving kindness to our patients. What does that mean? It means are we providing the right quality of care? Are we making sure that the patient is central to all the decisions we make?"

That approach has resonated with patients throughout CityMD's service area. In 2015, the practice saw more than 1.1 million patients, not one of whom needed to make an appointment.

"Our everyday patient is you, me, everybody. It's people who come in who don't have a primary care physician (PCP), who don't trust anybody, really," said Tatiana Ardila, site manager for at CityMD's East 37th Street clinic in Manhattan's Murray Hill neighborhood. "So they come to us for that care, especially since we have providers here on a consistent basis. I do think people have gotten used to that and we have become their primary care."
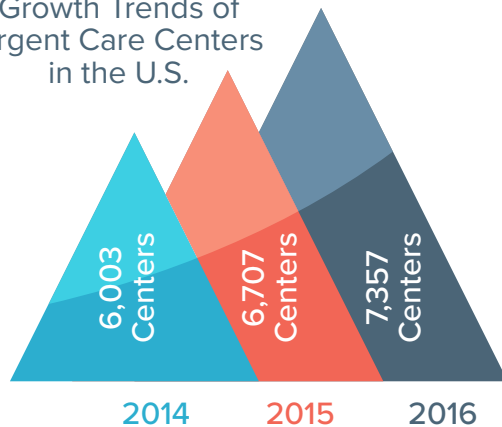
Keeping Up With Technological Needs

Making sure they fulfill that mission required that CityMD find a healthcare IT partner with the strength and depth to help it handle rapid growth, without ever losing its focus on its core mission.

"We really needed a solution that grew with us and scaled with us," Kannan said. "And more importantly, we needed a partner who can work with us, really understand what we do, and be innovative at the same time. eClinicalWorks made the jobs of our front desk, our PCRs, our scribes, and

Dr. Richard Park's belief in a better way to deliver healthcare led to the opening of CityMD, which served 1.1 million patients in 2015, with not one having to make an appointment.

our physicians and all our back office much easier and a lot more productive, so that they can focus on what they do best, which is taking care of patients, rather than staring at a computer screen and figuring out what to do next."

"It's very fast, it's efficient, and it's thorough, which is very important when we are documenting in the medical arena," said Dr. Janette Nesheiwat, who has worked at CityMD for two years. "With the

Urgent Care in America

Growth Trends of Urgent Care Centers in the U.S.

6,003 Centers — 2014
6,707 Centers — 2015
7,357 Centers — 2016

An estimated 3 million patients visit urgent care centers throughout the U.S. each week.

Top 5 States with Urgent Care Centers

374 New York

433 California

493 Texas

264 Michigan

489 Florida
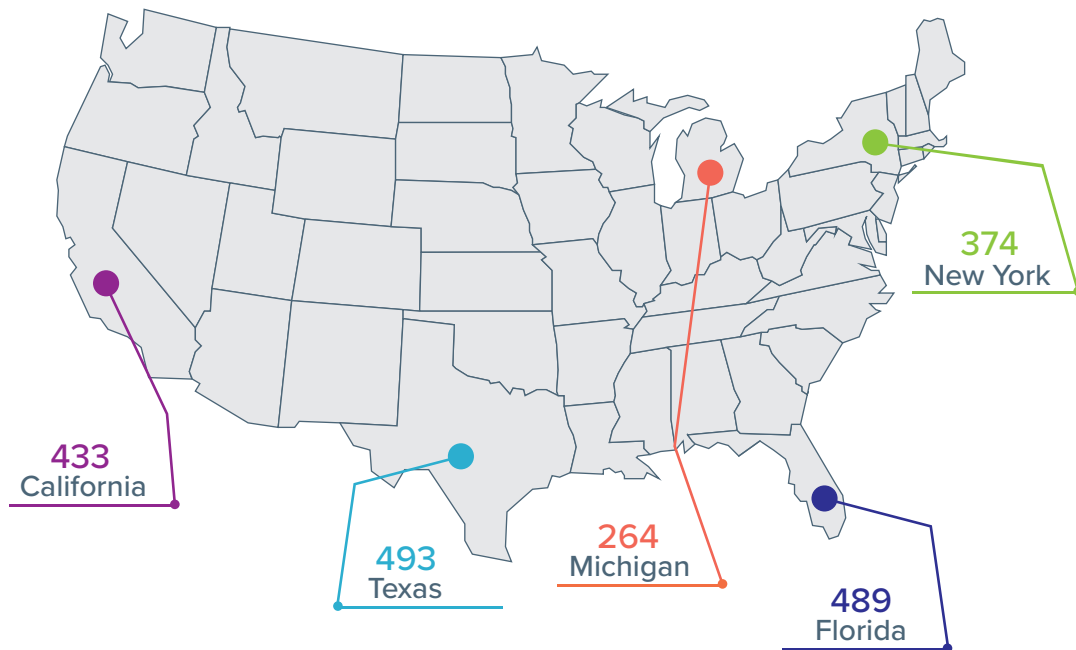
What is Considered an Urgent Medical Condition?

Urgent medical conditions are ones that are not considered emergencies but still require care within 24 hours. Some examples of such conditions include:

Accidents and falls • Sprains and strains • Breathing difficulties (i.e. mild to moderate asthma)
Bleeding/cuts -- not bleeding a lot but requiring stitches • Diagnostic services, including x-rays and lab tests
Eye irritation and redness • Fever or flu • Vomiting, diarrhea or dehydration • Severe sore throat or cough
Moderate back problems • Skin rashes and infections • Urinary tract infections
Minor broken bones and fractures (i.e. wrists, fingers, ankles, toes) where skin isn't broken

CityMD's rapid growth is a testament to just how much others agreed with Dr. Park's belief that there had to be a better way to deliver quality care. In seven years, the company has expanded to 68 locations, each of which offers a comprehensive range of services for all ages. Most locations are in and around New York City, including northern New Jersey, while three CityMD locations recently opened in metropolitan Seattle, Washington.

previous program we used it was a little bit tedious. You'd have to go from one page to another. But with eClinicalWorks, it's very smooth, it's efficient, and we're able to transition easily from one section to another without any hesitation or delay."

"From the minute you walk in and check in, entering patients' information, we have our beautiful Kiosks set up right now, which is integrated into our system, which is quick, user-friendly, efficient," Ardila said. "We get our patients' information, and then from that check-in they go into the rooms with the medical assistants and the providers, and now here come the medical assistants literally charting everything, from medications to treatments to the conversations they're having with the providers!"

Care Coordination Approach

"CityMD has a different model as compared to a lot of other urgent care organizations in the sense that we have a fairly large care coordination team," Kannan said. "That's sort of the safety net for us. What they do is they're constantly looking at all the patient records, following up on labs, following up on x-rays, diagnostic imaging, and contacting the patient after the patient has left the CityMD location."

Taking that approach required that CityMD deploy an integrated, diverse, and robust system.

"We have an amazing after-care program here at CityMD," Dr. Nesheiwat said, "and it works very well with the eClinicalWorks software and makes things very smooth so that we can all access the chart thoroughly and not miss anything that's important, and communicate with each other through the patient's chart, using eCW."

"For us in management, it's really easy," Ardila added, "because we check on an hourly basis just to make sure: Is the information getting integrated correctly? Do we have a specialist appointment we need to schedule? CT scans, you name it. We all see what each other does, and it's really cool. From the lab work, you see what's going in there. It's a really great system that puts all of us on the same page without even speaking, and the patients don't know half of what's going on behind the scenes, because it looks that easy!"

Kiosk for Check-in

In order to pull together such a complex system and meet the specific needs of CityMD patients, the practice decided to implement Kiosk, beginning with the Murray Hill clinic, which Ardila notes has traditionally been a proving ground for innovations throughout the practice.

A pilot program with Kiosk for patient check-in worked so well that CityMD deployed the Kiosk technology in every one of its more than 60 locations.

"We cater to those who don't want to wait in the emergency rooms," she said. "I think the biggest scare for people sometimes is the wait times, and the check-in process, and how long it takes. And here you have welcoming faces. We become the reliable place, for little babies just six months old to the elderly who stop by to have a quick conversation, speak with us, and feel that comfort level. We've become family in the neighborhood."

And beyond the neighborhood, the success of the pilot Kiosk program was soon followed by deployment of Kiosk at every CityMD location.

In choosing to deploy Kiosk, Kannan said CityMD had three goals:

- Preserve the quality of the patient experience
- Reduce the work burden on Patient Care Representatives (PCRs)
- Improve the quality of data capture by reducing transcription errors

"We really liked the Kiosk concept, but it was very primary care-centric," Kannan said. "So we worked closely with eClinicalWorks and customized the Kiosk experience for an urgent care patient. Again,

> The key to making a difference in patients' health lies in what a practice does with the data it collects. Usually it remains in the hands of patients or consumers, or patients will bring in their phones, having gathered some data through an app. It often turns out that such data is incomplete or of limited value.

using design-thinking principles, we rolled it out at one site, we piloted it, closely watched it, in terms of who's using this? Is it new patients? Established patients? What's their experience? How long do they take to use it, what mistakes are they making, what signage should we have for the patients? And then, how do we promote this?"

"Did we achieve all three goals? I think we did," Kannan said. "The adoption from the patients has been fairly high, about 55%, without any form of coaxing or encouragement. Secondly, all the feedback that we've had from the patients so far has been very positive. They really like the experience. The PCRs really like it, because it's reduced the amount of work they have to do. The data are right there so that they can do what they do best, which is interacting with the patients and taking care of them. And the accuracy of data has improved, too. The capture of email addresses has improved tremendously. We're still studying the improvements and accuracy, but the early results are excellent."

Communication Is the Key

At first, Ardila said, patients and staff alike took some time to adjust to the Kiosk. But it quickly became clear that it is just a much easier way to check patients in. Tired patients appreciated being able to check in quickly and then relax in the waiting room.

"They're almost shocked," Ardila said. "They're like 'Did it exit? Did it log out?' And I'm like, 'No, you're in! That's it! Have a seat, relax, and we'll do the rest for you.'"

Ardila said the scanning system works beautifully, placing the patient's personal information right into their chart, a process that used to take lots of staff time.

Ardila said that the system works as well as it does because her care teams are already committed to outstanding communication. The eClinicalWorks software simply makes their jobs that much easier, and helps ensure that every patient is made welcome, promptly and properly checked in, and is assured of seeing a doctor before long.

CityMD's guiding philosophy is to deliver quality medical care through convenient access and with kindness.

Of course, those time savings aren't banked, or taken as coffee breaks or down time. Rather, the practice's personnel use that time to focus on providing better care.

Driving Down Wait Times

"It's been a great process. Providers love it," Ardila said. "They actually see increased patient flows. Wait times have gone down. We went from 38 minutes on a good day, when everything's running smoothly, to a 34- or 35-minute wait time. That's good, especially when we see 95 to 100 patients a day."

The math backs Ardila up. While a three- or four-minute savings per patient may seem modest, multiplying that savings by the 95 to 100 patients a clinic can see in a day means that in the course of a year a busy clinic such as the one in Murray Hill is saving approximately 1,440 hours of staff time, the equivalent of 180 eight-hour shifts.

Of course, those time savings aren't banked, or taken as coffee breaks or down time. Rather, the practice's personnel use that time to focus on providing better care.

"There's so much going on sometimes in a day that the catch-up is never there," Ardila said. "And when you go through surges, it's even more difficult. So now here we have time to greet our patients, to make them feel welcomed, have those conversations, and schedule their appointments. It's almost like a scene from a movie. Literally, everybody's happy, smiling, and taken care of. And that's the most important part." ■

eClinicalWorks and CityMD have worked together on implementation of EHR and Practice Management solutions for a growing network of walk-in medical clinics in the greater NYC area, including a customized implementation of Kiosk to streamline check-ins and practice workflows.