CHEMED

HOW A NEW JERSEY HEALTH CENTER IS FULFILLING ITS VISION OF INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE

improving healthcare together

eClinicalWorks

CHEMED
Uniting Medical, Dental, and Behavioral Health

The Challenge

A Federally Qualified Health Center in New Jersey sought a new healthcare IT partner to help fulfill its mission of providing comprehensive and integrated healthcare services to uninsured and under-insured patients. The Center for Health Education, Medicine & Dentistry (CHEMED) sought to unite medical, dental, and behavioral health services.

The Solution

In 2017, CHEMED successfully implemented the comprehensive eClinicalWorks EHR/PM solution for its more than 65 providers. CEO Dr. Dovid Friedman said CHEMED made the switch to eClinicalWorks to advance its goal of an integrated, preventive approach to medicine, while giving providers a more secure and efficient method for documentation and communication.

The Results

With eClinicalWorks in place, CHEMED has been able to unify all the services it offers — medical, dental, and behavioral health — along with specialties including podiatry, gastroenterology, urology, and cardiology. Providers now enjoy unified patient records, more efficient workflows, and are able to create a quality healthcare experience for all patients.

A Vision of Quality Care for All

Dovid Friedman, CEO, CHEMED

Dr. Dovid Friedman, CEO of the Center for Health Education, Medicine & Dentistry (CHEMED), has practiced medicine around the world, seen the business of healthcare from many angles, and developed a deep understanding and appreciation for the challenges involved in bringing quality care to those in need.

A native of Johannesburg, South Africa, Dr. Friedman has practiced medicine there, in Israel, in England, and in the U.S. While with the healthcare division of American Express, he worked with health centers across the nation. For eight years he was a speaker at national conferences. And he worked as a physician executive for Henry Schein, Inc., a leading provider of healthcare products and services, where he was responsible for implementing Electronic Health Record systems at many community health centers.

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By the time he arrived at CHEMED, a Federally Qualified Health Center in Lakewood, New Jersey, Dr. Friedman had developed a clear vision focused on delivering truly integrated medicine.

"Our mission is to give quality healthcare to the uninsured and underinsured," he said.

"We're trying to bring the healthcare to the community, rather than take the community to the healthcare."

When it came time to find a healthcare IT partner with the products, services and vision equal to that integrated vision, Dr. Friedman was determined once again to take an integrated approach.

"We wanted to have input from everybody," Dr. Friedman said. "We wanted everybody to feel that this was the product that they wanted. So, my role was really more a champion of the concept. Really, my goal was to empower my staff to be able to choose the product that they felt was really the most appropriate."

Input from the Entire Organization

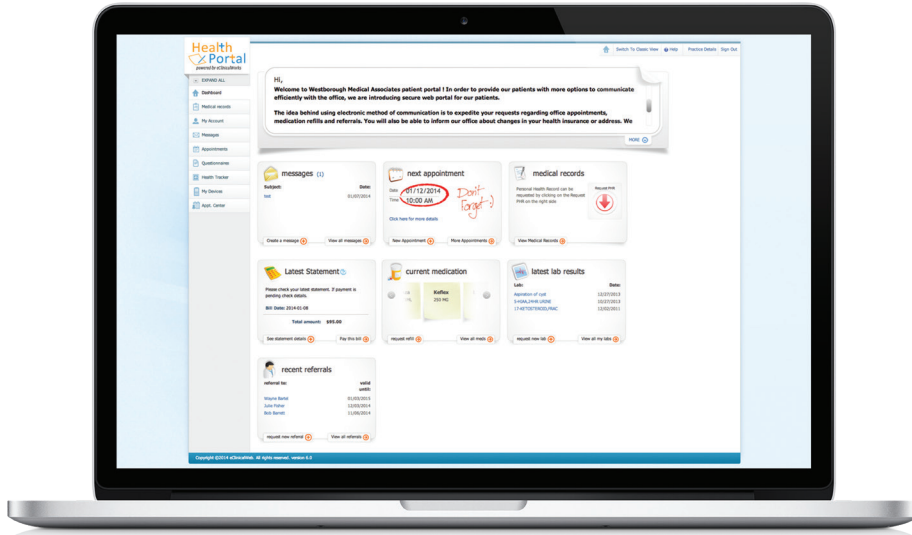As at many practices, CHEMED's workflows are critically dependent upon the efficiency of the office manager, who is responsible for seeing that everything works together.

Rivkie Reich, CHEMED's office manager, has no doubt that eClinicalWorks was the correct choice.

"We can log in from anywhere," Reich said. "Being in a managerial position, I need to handle schedules, even when I am outside of the office. Anywhere I am, I can just log on. It has definitely helped with communication, absolutely the key factor."

Director of Nursing Lisa Rivera agrees.

"It's very important to have an electronic system that's easy to navigate," Rivera said. "So we're able to see the complete history of

The eClinicalWorks Patient Portal has given CHEMED patients and providers alike a powerful new tool for efficient and effective communication, helping promote safer medicine and better outcomes.

a patient, what medications they're on, and everything that is pertinent to the patient. I've used a lot of electronic systems, and eClinicalWorks really is an easy system to navigate."

And not just for providers and staff.

"Patients nowadays are very savvy when it comes to computers," Rivera added. "Having the Patient Portal makes it a lot easier for them to be able to be aware of everything that's happening, so they have the most information, and then we reinforce that with the information we can provide them — for vaccines that are required or when they need to have any clinical appointments."
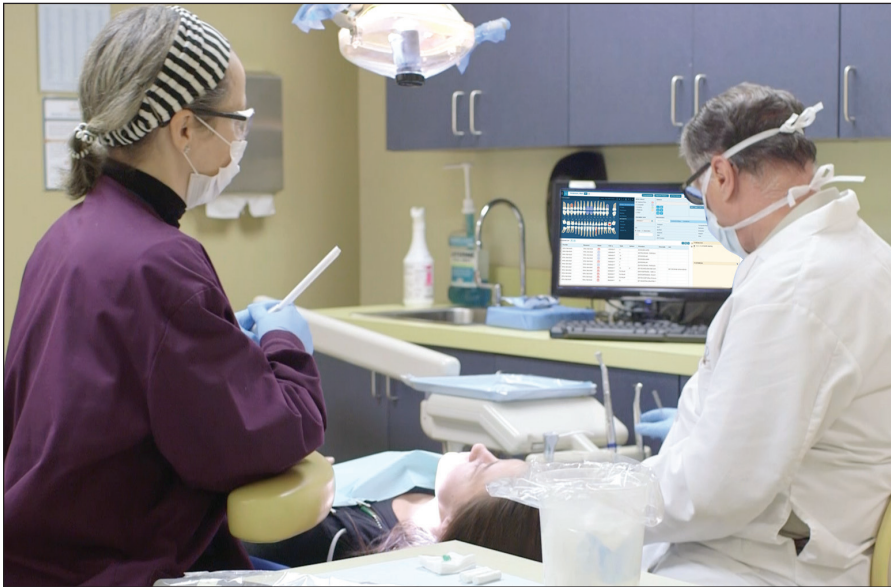
Continuity of Care Across Specialties

Choosing the right EHR was important — implementing it effectively even more so.

"The most important thing is we do work together here at CHEMED," said Dr. Eric Glantz, director of internal medicine. "We have a lot of different members of the team — nurses, referrals, the pharmacy — so communication between everybody is key. Through eClinicalWorks everyone is able to access the information together."

CHEMED offers an impressive range of services, from primary care to specialties including gastroenterology, endocrinology, pulmonology, urology, cardiology, and podiatry. They are planning to add orthopedic services soon. Having an integrated EHR is critical to ensuring the quality and continuity of care throughout the organization.

"I believe that a lot of what's achieved in America is phenomenal silo medicine," Dr. Friedman said. "The heights that can be achieved are tremendous, but the communication between the silos is lacking. I felt that what I wanted to do is create a health center where you didn't have that, where you had those heights, the peaks of achievement, but you also had good communication which allowed

people to be on the same page as to the needs of the patient, which helps the patient to understand what's really being told to them."

With eClinicalWorks in place, Reich said, it's just easier to ensure that patients are getting the information they need.

"Patients have been absolutely amazed that we've gone this far," she said. "They appreciate the text messages that we send them for reminders of their appointments."

Reminders have driven down no-show rates, Reich said, while providers have complete visibility of each patient's history, and are aware of every encounter, every incident of care, and every specialist's recommendations.

"Our goal is to work with eClinicalWorks to make sure that a single chart is used to actually identify and document patients," Dr. Friedman said. "But more than that, that we actually create reminders, that we actually have communication about the patients, and we make sure that the patient gets a single message from the primary care provider and the specialist."

The Example of Dental Integration

"The care here is very quality oriented," said Dr. Joseph Tricarico, dental director. "When I took this job, I was told to treat it like your own private practice, and I've never been corrected on how to do therapy. The care that patients get in this facility is similar to if not better than the care they would get in a private office. You get a total picture of a patient."

"We do all of our x-rays digitally, we do all of our scheduling on the computer, all of our billing. Everything we do is on that computer," said Jackie Doyle, who manages daily operations in the dental

At CHEMED, dental services are an integral part of delivering comprehensive, quality healthcare services to all in need.

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— Jackie Doyle,
Dental Operations Manager

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With their former EMR, Doyle said, staff were spending at least 10 minutes collecting each patient's history and demographics. With eClinicalWorks, they are saving at least five minutes per patient.

"Everything is at our fingertips, and it's super smooth," Doyle said, "and discussions with other providers within the facility are much easier than they ever were before. Compared to the old software we had, it has been a much smoother integration than I ever thought it would be."

"You not only see what's needed clinically, you see their medical history," Dr. Tricarico added. "And it integrates with your business side. So, there's a lot less paper, a lot more accuracy and, ergo, better dentistry."

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The Role of Behavioral Health

Another key factor in promoting an integrated vision of medicine at CHEMED is ensuring that behavioral health services are not viewed as a separate discipline, but a vital part of ensuring quality care delivery, no matter what the specialty may be.

"Having all the notes together, having the scheduling, having the appointments together for us all to collaborate on the work makes a tremendous impact on the patient," said Dr. Yossi Schaefer, a clinical psychologist who has been with CHEMED for five years. "I work within the adult internal medicine department. Many times we're called in to the pediatric department, women's health, and sometimes dentistry, to address various behavioral health components where the psychological impact sometimes gets very confused within the medical component."

The interventions could be as simple as providing patients with instructions to undertake a very simple exercise program. It might be asking a patient to take a walk around the block in their neighborhood three times a week, or make small changes to

their diet. Dr. Schaefer and the patient's primary care provider or specialist share access to patient records, thus ensuring seamless care and improved compliance.

"eClinicalWorks is very vital for this," Dr. Schaefer said. "If we didn't have the notes that the doctors can see and that allow us to collaborate, we wouldn't know how to go forward with the medical physician, or how to go forward with the patients."

In the past, he added, physicians simply didn't have that kind of sophisticated analytical tools available to them. With eClinicalWorks, they have the reporting, visibility, and perspective needed to determine whether it makes sense to continue medications or switch to behavioral health therapies.

"For the patient this is very beneficial," he continued, "as we can have all their notes consolidated in one place, and at any point that the patient wants to return, we can then have everything already constructed in a way that the next therapist can take over from there."

The CIO's Perspective

The unanimously positive reception that CHEMED's providers have given to the arrival of eClinicalWorks is gratifying and essential to providing better care, but there are also sound technical reasons for having made a move.

"CHEMED transitioned to eClinicalWorks over the past year," said Yaakov Schwartz, chief information officer. "We felt that the EMR we were using for the past five, six years was somewhat working, but not working well enough for our patients, to bring that level of care that we want to bring. In order to get to our next step, we needed a better system. And the eClinicalWorks cloud was the proper choice."

Something as simple as the installation of Kiosk for the dental portion of the practice, Schwartz said, has shown immediate improvements, cutting check-in time to under two minutes, saving staff time, and giving providers and their assistants some much-needed breathing room.

"We needed to make sure the technology was taken care of on the back end and the focus of our organization is not technology, but patient care," Schwartz said. "eClinicalWorks helped us by providing us with proper dashboards, proper management tools, and proper integration, especially having one system for our whole organization."

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About Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)

Federally Qualified Health Centers are community-based healthcare providers that receive funds from the HRSA Health Center Program to provide primary care services in underserved areas. They must meet a stringent set of requirements, including providing care on a sliding fee scale based on ability to pay and operating under a governing board that includes patients.

Federally Qualified Health Centers may be Community Health Centers, Migrant Health Centers, Health Care for the Homeless, and Health Centers for Residents of Public Housing.

In order to qualify for federal support as a health center, an organization must:

- Offer services to all persons, regardless of the person's ability to pay

- Establish a sliding fee discount program

- Be a nonprofit or public organization

- Be community-based, with the majority of their governing board of directors composed of their patients

- Serve a medically underserved area or population

- Provide comprehensive primary care services

WHAT TYPES OF SERVICES DO HEALTH CENTERS PROVIDE?

Health centers must provide primary care services for all age groups. Health centers must provide preventive health services on site, or by arrangement with another provider. Other services that must be provided directly by a health center or by arrangement with another provider include:

- Dental services

- Mental health and substance abuse services

- Transportation services necessary for adequate patient care

- Hospital and specialty care

How Many Visits?...

Number of Patient Visits to U.S. Health Centers in 2016

Medical

67.4 Million

Dental

13.2 Million

Mental Health

8.3 Million

Vision

672 Thousand

Sources: 2016 Bureau of Primary Health Care, HRSA, DHHS

Who Are They?...

U.S. Health Centers Serve Those Most in Need

1 in 6
Receive Medicaid

1 in 3
Are Low Income and Uninsured

1 in 3
Live Below Poverty Line

1 in 4
Are Rural Americans

Source: 2017 National Association of Community Health Centers

The Future of CHEMED

The coordination and integration that CHEMED has already achieved promise dramatic advances in care in the years ahead.

"eClinicalWorks was instrumental in implementing case management," said Shiffy Ochs, case management nurse. "We used the Population Health management module, and this module gives us the ability to create care plans, form risk assessments, and assign the care team to each patient. We also use CDSS or clinical alerts to help us see which factors, which tests, labs, and procedures the patients need to have performed."

CHEMED's overarching aim, Ochs said, is prevention.

"Our eventual goal is to include all patients in case management. Even healthy patients can still benefit from this."

"Our goals are to be on the cutting edge of medicine, to make a difference," Dr. Friedman said. "We don't want to be just another player. We want to be a beacon of light. We want to be able to push the borders, push the boundaries, achieve new goals, and really try and help other health centers to understand what can be achieved through the use of technology, through integrated services, and to really push for better outcomes. And I think eClinicalWorks has really helped us toward that goal." ■

The eClinicalWorks Healthcare Analytics Platform

The healthcare analytics tools included in eClinicalWorks help CHEMED obtain deeper understanding of their patient population and share effective care plans for each patient.