

MedPeds

The Challenge

MedPeds, a private practice of eight providers and 23 employees in Laurel, Maryland, understood its current paper-based system had become a detriment. By implementing an efficient Electronic Health Record (EHR), the practice anticipated cutting costs, improving the quality of patient care, and positioning the practice to be more competitive, now and for the future.

The Solution

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

The Results

After implementing eClinicalWorks, MedPeds improved its efficiency and the quality of its care. The practice won a 2013 HIMSS Davis Award of Excellence for achieving excellence for EHR implementation and uses by an ambulatory practice.

Practice Overview

MedPeds, a private practice of eight providers and 23 employees 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 its patients, who come from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic groups, and the majority of whom are either under age 18 or over age 64.

By implementing an efficient Electronic Health Record (EHR), the practice anticipated reducing costs, finding patient charts more easily, and making the delivery of care more convenient and efficient. MedPeds won the 2013 HIMSS Davies Award of Excellence for achieving exemplary implementation and utilization of an EHR in an independent ambulatory care practice. MedPeds became the 10th eClinicalWorks customer to receive a HIMSS Davies award.

"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, MedPeds agonized over lost charts, frustrated providers, and unacceptable gaps in the quality of care. Providers and staff understood that to correct these issues MedPeds needed to adopt an EHR. The practice began the difficult process of selecting a vendor, with the goals of reducing staffing costs, retrieving patient charts more easily, and positioning the practice to be more competitive, now and in the future.

In addition, the practice anticipated improvement in clinical documentation, patient follow-up, and efficiency of care for all patients, reduced scheduling and billing errors, improved collection of patient demographics, and enhanced communication between patients and providers.

After an in-depth evaluation, eClinicalWorks' comprehensive EHR was selected as best suiting MedPeds' needs as a primary care practice.

Implementation

To prevent a return 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 that eliminated any tendency to 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, staff, and patients enjoy better communications. The technology gives patients the flexibility to ask specific questions regarding their health and 24/7 access to their Personal Health 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, using the power of population management, helps the practice reach nearly all patients electronically, either through the Patient Portal or by text messaging. In many ways the tool is a game-changer for primary care, allowing practices to select a clinical condition, such as patients who have not had their flu shot, or to reach patients using a drug which has newly recognized side effects. Stakeholders have the information they need to make informed choices, improve treatments, promote overall wellness, and reduce costs.

Since 2012, MedPeds has been part of the Health Information Exchange (HIE) for Maryland, automatically sending medical summaries, including medications and allergies, through the eClinicalWorks eEHX®. Currently, 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 communications of routine information and alerts, administrative staff developed message macros. For abnormal results, the message would ask patients to contact the practice for detailed information. MedPeds also automated telephone and text messages for appointment reminders, no-show notifications, and to let patients know as soon as a prescription has been sent to the pharmacy. Patient Engagement has increased, with patients requesting referrals or prescription refills and sending specific questions to their provider. Overall, MedPeds has established a reliable reputation among patients, with satisfaction survey data providing 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 seen improvements:

- 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. After being carefully evaluated, with all information documented into her EHR, Heidi began the long road to recovery. Almost every month, 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,” she said.

Another instance of the technology saving a patient’s life came when a Registry outreach initiative recently alerted patients over 50 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 found to have colon cancer, which was successfully treated.

Cloud

In 2013, MedPeds transitioned to the cloud to further enhance the practice. The cloud ensures that MedPeds patient and practice data is safe, secure, and fully accessible. Nimbus, an innovative system downtime solution, keeps the practice functioning during EHR outages by synchronizing information from the practice, enabling staff to view and update patient information through a separate, dedicated cloud. Because Nimbus is web-based, MedPed’s schedule, patient medical summaries, and basic visit documentation 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,” said Dr. Seth Eaton.



Practice Manager Janet noted the additional benefits of converting to the cloud include cost reductions and an end to the trouble of hosting a server. Prior to the cloud, she said, there were server problems several times a week.

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Meaningful Use & Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH)

After reviewing the quality goals set by government programs, MedPeds recognized that achieving national incentives would improve patient outcomes. The eClinicalWorks EHR provided the practice with the tools to meet Meaningful Use and PCMH standards. Since 2009, MedPeds has received recognition as a Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH). In addition, all 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
- Increased vaccinations for 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,” said Ashley, a 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 popular throughout the practice.

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

Dr. Seth 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,” said Janet, the practice manager. “We have motivated all employees to help us keep our patients healthier and happier.”

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 recognition 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.