GRANGER MEDICAL CLINIC

18 CLINIC LOCATIONS AND MORE THAN 160 PROVIDERS SERVING THE GREATER SALT LAKE VALLEY AREA

improving healthcare together

eClinicalWorks

Granger Medical Clinic: People First

Utah Clinic Retains Independence by Prioritizing Patients and Providers

The Challenge

Since 1954, Granger Medical Clinic has provided high-quality primary and specialized care in the Salt Lake City, Utah area. They needed a healthcare IT partner to help provide outstanding care while protecting their independence and providers' clinical preferences.

The Solution

In 2013, Granger Medical Clinic switched to eClinicalWorks because physicians needed a system with greater capabilities, including interoperability and tools for Meaningful Use, Population Health, and Patient Engagement. Physicians and staff were trained to fully web-enable patients.

The Results

Four years after implementing eClinicalWorks, Granger Medical Clinic remains an independent, physician-governed healthcare leader, with an ACO quality score of 99.1%, interoperability connections with the University of Utah and Intermountain Healthcare, and a growing focus on Population Health.

Quality Healthcare in a Fast-Growing State

David C. Tanner, CEO

When Granger Medical Clinic was founded in 1954, the state of Utah was home to fewer than a million people. Today, Utah has more than 3 million residents, is the third fastest-growing state in the U.S., up 10.4% between 2010 and 2016, and has the youngest median age, at 30.5 years.

To anyone in healthcare, that suggests a huge opportunity to provide comprehensive medical services, from pediatrics and OB/GYN to adult primary and internal medicine.

"Granger's mission as a multi-specialty physician group is focused on providing quality care, one patient at a time," said David C. Tanner, Granger's CEO. "We want to be known as the provider of choice for exceptional care. We now have 18 different clinic locations and over 160 providers. We'll probably hit more than 300 providers in the next three years."

In 2013, the independent and physician-governed organization realized they needed an Electronic Health Records system with greater capabilities than what they had. They needed ways to address Meaningful Use, Patient Engagement, and Population Health challenges. And they needed solutions for interoperability.

With eClinicalWorks, Granger Medical Clinic found the new healthcare IT partner they needed.

Succeeding by Putting People First

Granger's philosophy of putting people first is evident throughout the organization, beginning with the first contact between patient and staff.

> **"** eClinicalWorks makes it easy for receptionists to update each patient's visit status, letting medical assistants and providers know when a patient is ready to be examined. **"**
>
> — Jennifer Vallejos, Practice Manager

Jennifer Vallejos

Practice Manager Jennifer Vallejos said eClinicalWorks makes it easy for receptionists to update each patient's visit status, letting medical assistants and providers know when a patient is ready to be examined. Staff encourage patients to become web-enabled, explaining the advantages of using computers and smartphones to access health information and messages.

Vallejos said patients appreciate knowing that no matter which location or clinic they may have visited, the doctor seeing them that day will know all about it. They also love the enhanced access to their records and labs.

"Let's say the patient has a lab," Vallejos said. "The provider will respond to that lab and send it through the Patient Portal, and if the patient wasn't able to call and it was a Friday, they will be able to get on the Patient Portal and see the comments that the provider has made for their lab results. They don't need to wait until Monday."

And by the fact of being doctor-owned and managed, Granger Medical Clinic keeps medical professionals at the forefront of decisions.

"Granger started out as an independent physician organization and has worked very diligently to remain independent," Tanner said. "We prefer that because it gives us the choice of choosing and using which hospital system is best for our patients."

"We do a lot of communication with the internal teams," said Amanda Babbitt, Granger's Director of EMR & Informatics. "Granger has done a really good job of making sure that the different departments — not just mine, but information systems, marketing, and others — are part of key leadership positions."

How Do Electronic Health Records (EHRs) Connect Patient and Provider?
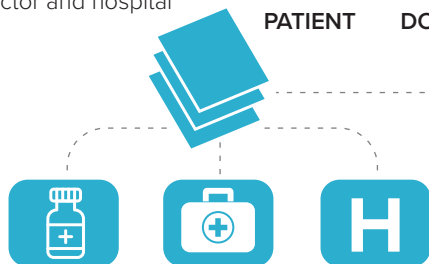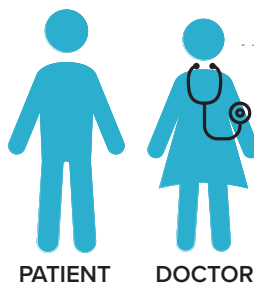
Electronic Health Records

In the past, medical data was only stored on paper, making it difficult for healthcare providers to share information. Between 2004 and 2015, the number of doctors using an EHR system grew to about 86%, making it easier for doctors, institutions, and other healthcare specialists to coordinate the patient's care, often reducing the chance of medical errors. Where are Electronic Health Records headed? In this Infographic, view the history of Electronic Health Records and see how they may improve health and healthcare in the future.

IN THE PAST

THERE WAS A LOT OF PAPER

Most medical data wasn't electronic, and the exchange of information between the following healthcare providers was difficult and slow. Sometimes impossible.
- Doctor and pharmacy
- Doctor and another health care provider
- Doctor and hospital

PATIENT   DOCTOR

BUT NOW

MANY PROVIDERS ARE USING ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

Doctors, labs, pharmacies, and hospitals can store patients' health data electronically. This helps to:
- Make the doctor visit faster
- Seamlessly coordinate the patient's care among providers
- Allow the patient to be in control of their medical data

PATIENT   DOCTOR

PHYSICIANS' USE OF EMR/EHR SYSTEMS INCREASED FROM

20% ➡ 86%
IN 2004   IN 2015
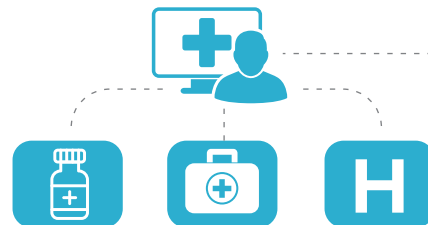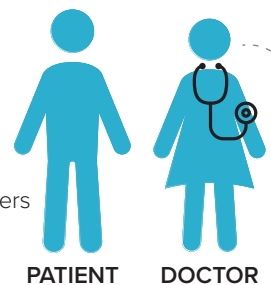
2 out of 3 people
WOULD CONSIDER SWITCHING
To a physician who offers access to medical records through a secure
INTERNET CONNECTION

WHERE ARE WE HEADED?
Emerging technologies offer new ways for you and your patient to monitor and manage chronic illnesses.

Extended Care eVisits

Prescription Management

Clinical Support

Virtual Visits

Mobile Healthcare

Real-Time File Transfer

Dr. Easton D. Jackson

The Physician's Perspective

For physicians, Granger is attractive not simply because of its size and the support it offers, but because it is owned and directed by doctors.

"Many physicians like the idea of working for themselves or owning their own business in one sense, but they don't like to get bogged down, or spend the time that may be necessary with all the business, bureaucratic, governmental, payer side of it," said Dr. Easton D. Jackson, EMR Medical Director and a member of Granger's board of directors.

At Granger, he noted, providers know they are equal shareholders and that, far from working for a larger, faceless organization, "the people making the decisions are doctors like me."

"Our culture," Tanner added, "is such that we support any device that the physician might have, or the method that they want to use to input data."

Many Paths to Patient Satisfaction

With more than 160 providers, Tanner acknowledged there are many opinions about how an EHR should work. That's where the customizability of eClinicalWorks offers an advantage.

Dr. Jackson said the system does everything he needs, including reminding him about the critical updates that a patient may need, or gaps in care that might exist — things that he could simply overlook if he had to rely upon a less robust EHR. But the real selling points are customization and flexibility.

"Providers everywhere complain they want to spend less time in front of the computer or their technology, and more time in front of

the patient, and eClinicalWorks gives lots of different options and ways to do it," Dr. Jackson said. "Not every physician has to do it the same way, and I want them to know the various options that will work, and then they can use the one that works most efficiently."

That approach is working.

"One of the things that we hear regularly from our patients in both our satisfaction surveys and individual feedback from our patients, is the relationship that they have with their doctor is one that is really unique, very strong," Tanner said. "The patients feel that their physician is their physician, is their advocate, and working in their best interests for their healthcare. That intimate relationship between patient and physician is key, and one of the things that sets us apart."
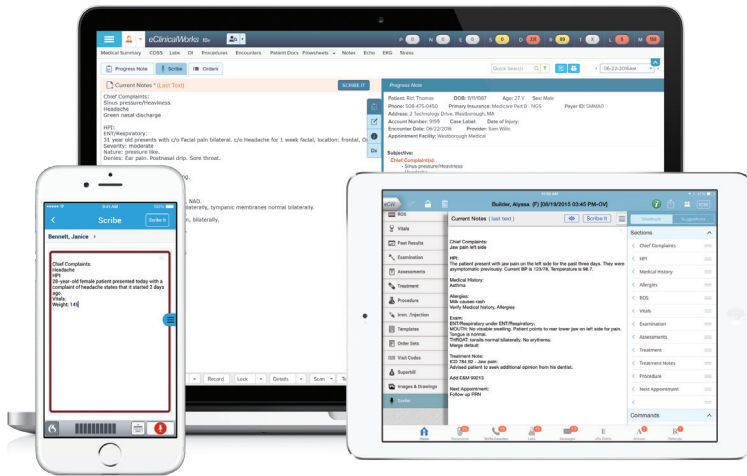
One of the organizational strengths of Granger Medical Clinic is allowing providers the flexibility to document cases by whatever method works best for them, such as using **eClinicalWorks Scribe** to convert dictation into structured Progress Notes.

Dr. Jackson cited a recent example of how seamlessly Granger operates with eClinicalWorks in place. An urgent care patient's blood count came back as critically elevated, to the point that the physicians were concerned about a possible cancer or some other immediate, life-threatening condition.

"The doctor who was looking at it was able to look and see that they saw their primary care doctor at one of our other locations two days previously," Dr. Jackson said. "Their doctor already knew about this really high lab, and had already set them up to see the hematologist."

Organization-Wide Success Stories

Such day-to-day successes, like the savings of clicks, keystrokes and minutes here and there, add up to a larger portrait of success at Granger Medical Clinic.

In 2014, Granger established an Accountable Care Organization, and just a year later was ranked as having the sixth-lowest cost per Medicare beneficiary in the nation. Tanner noted that while keeping patients well doesn't have the same sound-bite impact as someone telling how a kidney transplant saved their life, it is a

> **"** We need to be able to show Medicare and third-party payers that we're offering great care at a lower cost than average. With eClinicalWorks, especially with the new modules for Population Health, we can get more of that reporting and be able to show that to our payers for our patients' benefit and for the clinic at large. **"**

— Dr. Easton D. Jackson, EMR Medical Director

better result, one that holds down costs for everyone, and that one is "fundamentally driven by its ability to manage the patient and the data on that patient episode and at multiple care episodes."

Success can also be measured in financial terms.

"Our revenue cycle has never been healthier," Tanner said. "We just reported that we have A/R days that are 35 days in this market. That's extremely healthy, and we find that that Practice Management system helps us achieve that in workflow management."

And eClinicalWorks has helped Granger Medical Clinic be a full partner with other medical institutions.

"The University of Utah, and the Utah Health Information Network have qualified for a few different federal grant projects recently, and they tend to reach out to us here at Granger because they know that we'll be helpful," Babbitt said. "eClinicalWorks was incredibly helpful in building some custom tools for us to help them meet their grant requirements."

How Data Will Address Population Health

Like any great organization, Granger Medical Clinic is also looking beyond its current successes and preparing for the challenges to come.

Those goals include a more detailed and data-driven approach to Population Health.

Physicians may think their biggest patient population problem is diabetes," Dr. Jackson said. "Well, now we can drill down to say well, actually, the thing that is getting your patients hospitalized the most is a heart failure exacerbation. I may not be able to see that because there's too many trees to look at in the forest. I can't see it. Well, if I've got the tool to see it, I can really refocus my efforts."

"So I'm looking forward to more of the Chronic Care Management and Population Health modules and capabilities," Dr. Jackson continued. "We need to be able to show Medicare and third-party payers that we're offering great care at a lower cost than average. With eClinicalWorks, especially with the new modules for Population Health, we can get more of that reporting and be able to show that to our payers for our patients' benefit and for the clinic at large."

"Technology is the lifeblood of our organization," Tanner said. "With the data, we can manage individual patient episodes and/or reoccurring episodes of treatment, and aggregate those for total Population Health management."

People Helping People

Granger's people-first approach to care is woven throughout each of the practice's locations. It is also reflected in Granger's decision to organize user group meetings to bring together eClinicalWorks users in the Salt Lake City area to share their knowledge and experiences. And it extends to one other piece of its relationship with eClinicalWorks that Dr. Jackson considers vital — attending the annual eClinicalWorks National Conference.

Granger Medical Clinic began sending staff to the Conference the year before they went live with eClinicalWorks, and has continued to expand their contingent each year.

"That was just immensely valuable," Dr. Jackson said. "In the past, when we would go to Conference we would hear about these new technologies, new modules or options that we'd want to roll out, and that's a little bit hard to convey in a board meeting or to the people who haven't been there. I think bringing a larger team, both from clinical, EMR, and administration, was just of immense benefit to us, and now we're rolling out a lot of the modules and options that we may not have before."

But it's not just about getting a look at new technologies.

"Probably just as important, you get to meet with other physicians, other office staff, and see how they're using it," Dr. Jackson said. "Just the brain share that goes on there is tremendous. I learn new stuff from other physicians and other office people every time I go."

That may be the best way to describe Granger Medical Clinic's entire philosophy and story: As much as technology can help, the real work of medicine is about people helping people. ■