

eClinicalWorks

# CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



## PRIME CARE FAMILY PRACTICE

HOW PATIENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SERVICES CAN HELP

*improving healthcare together*

### The Challenge

Prime Care Family Practice, a 25-year-old practice serving Prince George, Virginia, was already doing a very good job serving tens of thousands of patients each year. But after adopting eClinicalWorks as their comprehensive Electronic Medical Records and Practice Management solution, the practice realized they had the tools to create a truly great practice. The only question was how to go about it.

### The Solution

Learning to implement the many tools available in eClinicalWorks was a good start, but the critical factor in transforming the practice was Patient Relationship Management Services from eClinicalWorks. Experts trained staff in Patient Engagement tools, including healow apps and Patient Portal, and Prime Care followed up by assigning staff as “healow champions” to ensure that the training took lasting effect.

### The Results

Five years after introducing eClinicalWorks, Prime Care now has 25% of their patients on the healow app, has seen 10,000 fewer phone calls in the last year, is using medical assistants and scribes to help reduce the risk of provider burnout, and is actively using additional methods, including telemedicine and Population Health analytics, to achieve what Dr. Amar Shah calls practice wisdom.

## Prime Care Family Practice

Talk About Excellence!

### Posters Are Great, But Not Quite Enough



Amar Shah, MD

Dr. Amar Shah thought Prime Care Family Practice had everything it needed. They had been using eClinicalWorks for Electronic Health Records and Practice Management for several years. The practice’s half-dozen providers were seeing about 600 patients a week.

But something was missing. Dr. Shah sensed that his practice somehow could be more responsive, more efficient, and more effective.

Enter the healow Patient Relationship Management (PRM) Services experts from eClinicalWorks, who showed Prime Care providers and staff how to transform their practice through better Patient Engagement.

“We had banners placed in the waiting room about the healow app,” Dr. Shah said. “We also had strategic posters placed in the bathrooms and high-traffic areas in the office. And then we had trifold cards that were handed out to patients at the front desk and at each provider’s pod.”

But the eClinicalWorks experts made clear to Dr. Shah and his staff that technology and marketing materials alone are not enough. If you really want to achieve excellence, you have to literally talk about the tools you offer. And talk about them not just among your staff, but with your patients. And talk about them not just once or twice, but every working day, with each patient encounter.

“It had to be an active effort of talking about it,” Dr. Shah said, “telling them why it was important, and getting them signed on before they left the office.”

---

The eClinicalWorks experts made clear to Dr. Shah and his staff that technology and marketing materials alone are not enough. If you really want to achieve excellence, you have to literally talk about the tools you offer. And talk about them not just among your staff, but with your patients. And talk about them not just once or twice, but every working day, with each patient encounter.

---



With constant outreach to and training, Prime Care has been able to get many patients web-enabled on Patient Portal, increasing the practice's overall efficiency.

---

## Engaging Patients in Their Own Care

---

Bringing in PRM Services to more fully engage patients was the logical extension of a process that had been unfolding for several years.

“Engagement is very important because we need to establish a relationship with our patients,” said Stephanie Gravely, a Certified

Medical Assistant and scribe at Prime Care. “We get to know each one individually, so we understand where they’re coming from when they ask for certain things, or they need certain tests, or they need certain lab work. And using the healow app, they are able to talk to the doctor directly in their own words about what is going on with them or what they need.”

Both the Patient Portal and the healow app have been welcomed by Prime Care patients, who enjoy the ease and convenience both offer.

“I was happy to learn shortly after we came here that we had the Portal available to us, and it’s been constantly evolving, and we enjoy using it,” said Wayne Stefaniak, who is a Prime Care patient along with his wife, Jean. “It has been a big improvement compared to our previous doctor’s office, where we never did find out our lab results. Being able to go on the computer and find out just what you’re going to be talking to the doctor about with some intelligence makes a big difference. And it’s easy to refill prescriptions just off the computer. It’s great. Everybody should be using it.”



---

Dr. Shah said that the old way of doing medicine — where patients come in, see the doctor, get a prescription, leave, and then have little contact until their next appointment — is over. It's over because it simply doesn't produce the kind of results that everyone wants to see. It's over because it doesn't help curb costs. And it's over because it doesn't provide practices with the data and visibility they need to deliver holistic care — or patients with the responsive care they really want.

---

"The patients initially were apprehensive," Dr. Shah noted, "but once they were shown how the app works and how easy it is to log in — and that they don't have to remember their password and user name every single time — they were more readily accepting of it. And once they were shown how to send a message, and how to ask for a refill, and how to schedule an appointment, they were sold."

"Every three months I come for a check-up because I have high blood pressure and I'm a diabetic," said patient Carolyn Eubanks. "And Dr. Shah can go

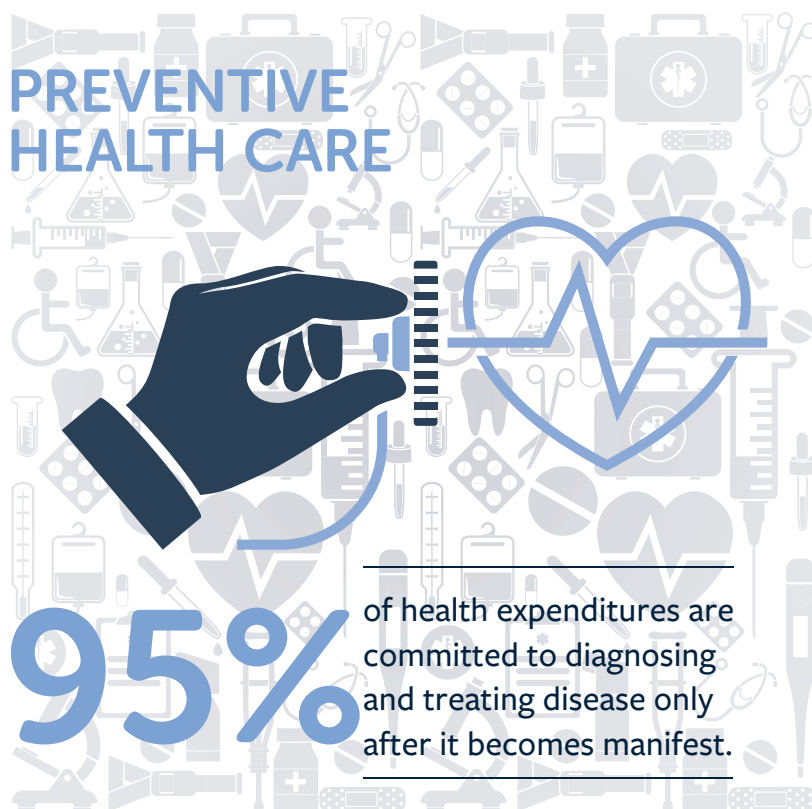
back and look up my lab results and see what's going on — if my blood pressure's high, is anything going on in my life to make it go up, or if he needs to adjust my medicine accordingly. It's a good way for me and him to communicate."

Dr. Amar R. Shah says that once patients were shown how easy it is to use the healow app, they love the convenience it offers.



Dr. Shah said that the old way of doing medicine — where patients come in, see the doctor, get a prescription, leave, and then have little contact until their next appointment — is over. It's over because it simply doesn't produce the kind of results that everyone wants to see. It's over because it doesn't help curb costs.

And it's over because it doesn't provide practices with the data and visibility they need to deliver holistic care — or patients with the responsive care they really want.



Leveraging technology to create more efficient, team-based approaches to medicine can help practices enhance wellness and increase prevention efforts, helping improve patient outcomes.

Each new aspect of the growing practice required deliberation, discussion, and cooperation.

“We created standing Order Sets. We weren’t able to do that in our previous system,” Dr. Shah said. “We implemented scribes about two years ago for all the providers, and now Progress Notes are done in a timely manner, they’re locked in a timely manner, and the care is much more efficient.”

The effect of many small changes was clear: Prime Care was now taking a truly team-based approach to care.

“Now, all nurses and all medical assistants and all front desk are involved in the preventive health services of the practice,” Dr. Shah said. “From flu shots to pneumococcal vaccines to colonoscopies to mammograms, these are standing Order Sets. If patients are overdue for those things, an order is easily created, a shot is easily given and documented in the Note, and that’s one less thing for a provider to do. And providers can really focus on the true medical needs of the patients for that day.”

---

## Developing Team-Based Medicine

---

The power of talk and teamwork did not surprise Dr. Shah and his staff, because they already understood that collaboratively integrating new technologies was enormously powerful.

Five years ago, when the practice first began working with eClinicalWorks, they began small, with electronic prescribing. One by one, they added new products and services, including Chronic Care Management and transition-of-care services. They brought a nurse manager into the practice to handle Medicare wellness visits.



Dr. Shah said that having scribes is enormously beneficial for providers, who would otherwise be spending nearly four additional hours each week working on their computers to input data into the EMR. Having scribes handle that work reduces physician burnout and means everyone has faster access to complete records for each visit.

---

## Creating ‘Practice Wisdom’

---

But transitioning to new methods of care that are consistent with value-based reimbursement models isn't easy. It requires paying attention to the specific needs of the community one serves.

“I believe that healthcare is local,” Dr. Shah said. “It's hard to bring something new into a community that they're not used to seeing. That goes for any community, whether it's New York City, San Antonio, Texas, or Prince George,

Virginia. So, the needs of the patients here are drastically different, and it takes that physician rapport to promote change. And it will never occur if it's just given as data, if it's just given as facts. There has to be a true sense of caring.”

That sense of caring is on display daily in the way Prime Care handles its patients.

As an assistant and scribe, Gravely spends much of her time preparing patients and doctors for encounters, and actually accompanies doctors during the visits, making sure all patient information is current and available.

“I'm in the room with them,” she said, “putting in the issues that the patient's currently having into the chart while the physician is working with the patient directly, rather the patient and the physician being separated by the computer.”

Dr. Shah said that having scribes is enormously beneficial for providers, who would otherwise be spending nearly four additional hours each week working on their computers to input data into the EMR. Having scribes handle that work reduces physician burnout and means everyone has faster access to complete records for each visit.

Thus, eClinicalWorks has made a real difference throughout Prime Care. Providers have lowered their risk of burnout. Nurses have 40% fewer messages to deal with. A quarter of patients are using Patient

Portal, and that number grows daily. The front desk handled 10,000 fewer phone calls last year because patients now have better ways to communicate online.

“I’ve never ascribed to the notion that knowledge is power,” Dr. Shah said. “Knowledge plus insight creates wisdom, and that’s what we’re trying to do here, create practice wisdom.”

---

eClinicalWorks has made a real difference throughout Prime Care. Providers have lowered their risk of burnout. Nurses have 40% fewer messages to deal with. A quarter of patients are using Patient Portal, and that number grows daily. The front desk handled 10,000 fewer phone calls last year because patients now have better ways to communicate online.

---

---

## The Future: Breaking Down Barriers

---

Prime Care’s future, Dr. Shah said, is really about making healthcare ever more accessible to patients by breaking down remaining barriers to care.

The practice has already adopted healow Open Access® appointment booking, allowing patients to book their own appointments online. They are

now beginning to use the eClinicalWorks telemedicine solution, TeleVisits, to better accommodate patients who need a quick or routine consultation but cannot come to the office for some reason, be it childcare duties, work, or inclement weather.

But TeleVisits aren’t just about convenience.

“We would probably get better compliance with chronic disease management and medications,” Dr. Shah said. “We are part of a clinically integrated network, and that network tends to look at data for our practice and relays that information to us. We have done exceptionally well with our quality metrics. eClinicalWorks is a great resource for our HEDIS® measures and other quality metrics, which we can customize for each provider or each practice, and I think that that’s where the true future of our practice is going to be. If it weren’t for eClinicalWorks, we wouldn’t be here today.” ■

HEDIS® is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).