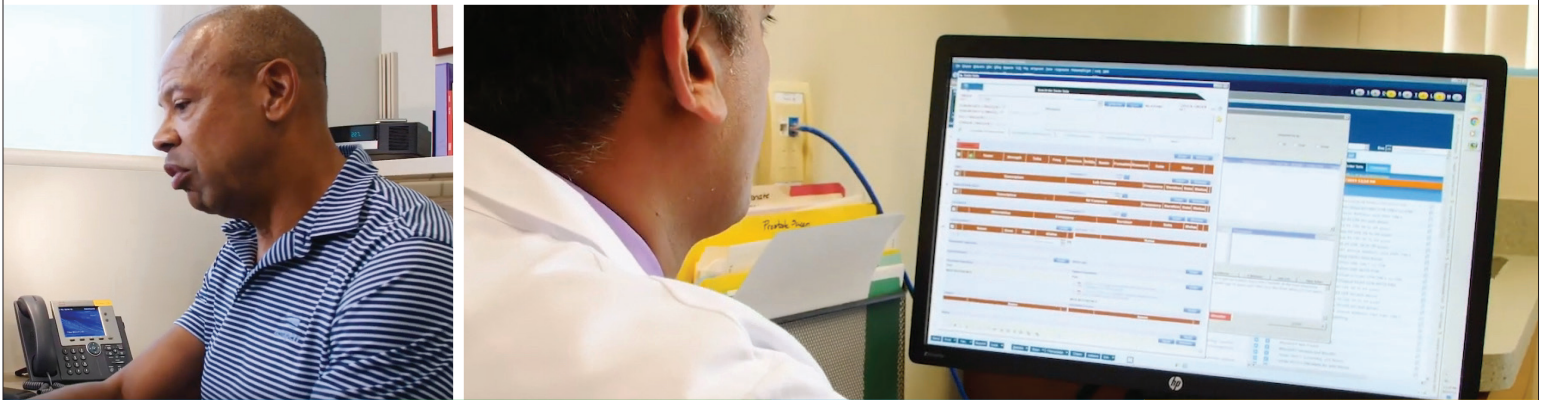
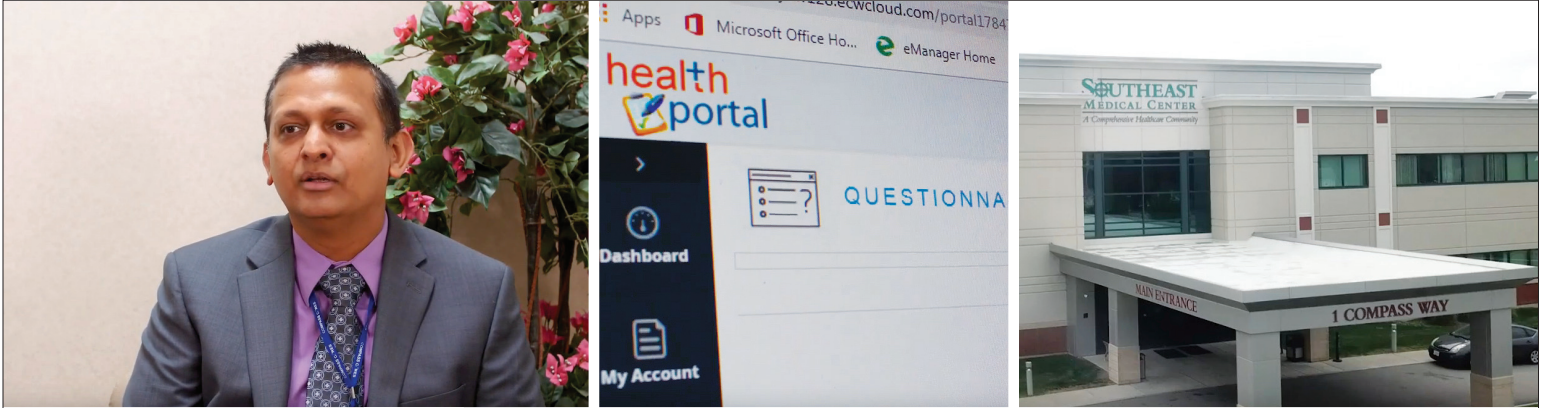


CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



Compass Medical

Growing a Practice, Saving Lives

The Challenge

For more than 20 years, Compass Medical has delivered comprehensive, compassionate care in Southeastern Massachusetts. As the practice grew to serve 80,000 patients, they recognized they needed an EHR capable of helping them manage growth.

The Solution

In 2015, Compass Medical switched to eClinicalWorks, gaining tools to optimize workflows and reduce risks of provider burnout, as well as data analytics to address Population Health challenges they face as an Accountable Care Organization.

The Results

Following Go-Live in March 2015, Compass Medical trained all employees on eClinicalWorks. With the help of the eClinicalWorks EHR, they screened 2,000+ patients at risk for lung cancer, detecting and treating cancer in 19 patients.

Compass Medical

Growing a Practice, Saving Lives

Simple Mission, Complex Growth

From the day they opened their doors more than 20 years ago, Compass Medical's mission has been simple — provide compassionate care and exceptional medicine.



Dhrumil Shah, MD

“When a patient comes to Compass, they are part of the community,” says Dr. Dhrumil Shah, Chief Medical Information Officer. “We are a family-care-driven organization, focused on prevention and health management.”

With 100 or more providers, over 500 staff, seven locations in six communities, and 80,000+ patients, Compass was doing everything necessary to grow. They soon realized they needed new and better healthcare IT tools to manage that growth.

Their needs, Dr. Shah said, include providing complex and chronic care services. They participate in an Accountable Care Organization and employ sophisticated analytics to guide Population Health initiatives.

The Right Tools and Training

“We recognized early on the benefit of having the power of data to manage whole populations — at a 30,000-foot level and at a three-foot level,” said Dr. Michael Myers, Chief Medical Officer. “You can’t do that without data from the EHR.”

Compass Medical went live with eClinicalWorks in March 2015. EHR and Systems Manager Christine Machado and two colleagues completed the eClinicalWorks Train the Trainer program, then trained the rest of the Compass Medical staff.

“It’s been pretty phenomenal,” Machado said. “From an EMR standpoint, we started evaluating how do

we make it quicker, easier, faster? We did not want to make this an additional, overwhelming task. We really took to heart the governance processes we have.”

“Our approach to compassionate care means that we try to bring values of what we believe in as Compass to every one of our team members,” Dr. Shah said. “We use the technology and data and operational efficiencies for every one of the end-users, and not just focus on the physicians. You can use your medical assistant, you can use your scribe, a nurse care manager, your office manager, your front-desk staff.”

Achieving Optimal Performance

Implementing that approach required outstanding communication.

“We are a company and a culture that is very performance-driven,” Dr. Myers said. “We are the irritating, grade-grubbing kid in the class who is always raising their hand, looking how they can get an A in organic chemistry. I am one of those people. I am not ashamed of that part of me!”

Nor is Dr. Myers shy about sharing tools for achieving success, including helping his fellow providers better monitor performance on quality measures, showing them, where necessary, how to go from a C to an A.

“Once you start bringing that data out, and showing it to individual providers, or citing an office’s performance, people get the message,” he said. “We just use the data to motivate behavior, to give them incentive and encouragement to do better.”

Targeting Lung Cancer

Compass Medical can point to dramatic success with lung cancer screening.

Dr. Shah said Compass is fortunate to collaborate with larger centers such as the Lahey Clinic and has now become a center of excellence for lung cancer screening in Massachusetts. Just a decade ago, he

“Lung cancer’s a whole series of things. It’s age range, it’s smoking status, it’s smoking history. We were able to develop some criteria to help our medical assistants. We were able to embed questionnaires through eCW so they could determine if a person met those criteria. And then let the physician know, this person probably is a candidate for lung cancer screening.”

— Michael Myers, MD

said, a diagnosis of lung cancer was almost always a death sentence. Since 2017, Compass has screened thousands of patients for lung cancer and treated those in whom cancers were found.

“Lung cancer’s a whole series of things,” Dr. Myers said. “It’s age range, it’s smoking status, it’s smoking history. We were able to develop some criteria to help our medical assistants. We were able to embed questionnaires through eCW so they could determine if a person met those criteria. And then let the physician know, this person probably is a candidate for lung cancer screening.”

Early Detection Saves Lives

Dr. Myers estimates Compass has now screened about 80% of all patients considered to be at risk for lung cancer. In the past, when many aggressive tumors were discovered late, a person diagnosed

with lung cancer had only about a 20% chance of surviving five years.

“The key to a cure is finding it early so you can get people cured in radiation or surgery or medical oncology,” he said. “We’ve actually found 19 early-stage cancers. These are people who likely would have died if we had not set this program up. Our ability to do that work is aided by the systems that we’ve set up, the questionnaires, the templates, the Order Forms. We then track and follow these patients carefully over time because they have to have annual scans.”

Addressing Physician Burnout

Even as they continue to use technology for early detection of disease, Compass is also focusing on detection of another serious problem in healthcare, physician burnout.



Using analytics available in the eClinicalWorks EHR, Compass Medical has been able to conduct a comprehensive screening program for those at risk for lung cancer — screening thousands of patients and treating 19 patients in whom lung cancer was detected.

“Physician burnout is very near and dear to me, because I have myself gone through it,” Dr. Shah said. “The way we tackle it is let’s prepare for the change, let’s manage the change, and make it as predictable as possible.”

Machado told about a provider specializing in cryotherapy who needed a template for a particular procedure. She spent a half-hour working with him on how to create the template, and when she followed up with him, learned that he had saved enough time to add two more patients to his schedule each week.

“After spending about half an hour to an hour with the providers, the providers definitely feel much more engaged with how to make eClinicalWorks work toward their needs, whether it’s a specific procedure, a style of documentation in their Notes, or understanding those concepts,” she said.

“Primary care is hard,” Dr. Myers said, “and it’s hard because there are more and more expectations on you for what you can do to help patients navigate the healthcare system. And it feels dramatically unfair, and I totally get that point.

“Our company’s made a big investment in technology, not just in terms of the hardware, but the personnel,” he continued. “And I think that the physicians who are experiencing burnout and frustration are continuing to kind of stay in a mode where they’re thinking about paper records or some other way of doing their work. But it’s 2019-2020. These things are powerful tools. Don’t deprive yourself of this. Learn about it, train yourself, train your staff, get a good team, huddle with them. That’s the secret to getting through burnout.”

Many Options for Crunching Data

Having recognized the importance of data to modern healthcare, Dr. Myers said, the practice has assembled a data development group, co-led by himself and Dr. Shah, that focuses on the Population Health needs of Compass’s covered population, about 110,000 lives.

“Leadership is very involved and data-driven. We’re away from paper records. We’re away from what I would even call retail-based medicine,” he said. “We really are moving toward whole population care,

“The future of healthcare is technology-enabled and data-driven, and this journey cannot be done without having a trusted partner — your EHR vendor in our case — eClinicalWorks.

— Dhruvil Shah, MD

which is what the future of medicine and value-based medicine is about.”

Dr. Shah notes that Compass is achieving its success while respecting the individual styles of providers, including their preferred methods for documentation.

“There are a lot of different ways various providers manage their work schedule on a day-to-day basis,” he said, “whether it is a provider using a nurse and a medical assistant in a team-based approach, providers using Scribe, some using the voice-recognition system. Or, some of the providers use all of these tools together. We have found that there is no one standard practice which works for all of the providers.”

Putting It All Together

“The future of healthcare is technology-enabled and data-driven, and this journey cannot be done without having a trusted partner — your EHR vendor in our case — eClinicalWorks,” Dr. Shah said. “We see the future of technology bringing all these stakeholders together, whether it is an employer group, or a payer, or a provider, or patients — all of them need one form or another of technology to bridge the gap of communication.”

“This doesn’t require you to hire an army of trainers to make an impact,” Dr. Shah said. “At Compass Medical, we have an EHR team of two or three people right now, and you can make a difference with any number of resources you have. You just have to start somewhere.”

“The artistry is the thing that people have to remember,” Dr. Myers said. “You have to really figure out better ways to play your instrument, because when you do that, you’re going to produce better outcomes.” ■