

At a Glance

Organization

Rio Pecos Family Practice
Ruidoso and Capitan, N.M.

- One physician organization
- Two primary care clinics

Solution Spotlight

- Practice Partner®
Appointment Scheduler
- Practice Partner®
Patient Records

Critical Issues

- Limited access to paper-based records across geographically dispersed practice locations
- Undercoding of visits
- High overhead

Results

- Increased ability to access and maintain patient records from multiple locations
- Recouped system cost in only eight months
- 30% increase in patient volume and billing
- Decreased overhead expenses
- Increased patient visits per day
- Improved patient education

Rio Pecos Family Practice Implements EHR to Boost Productivity and Brighten Financial Outlook

Like many physicians operating in rural areas, Walter Ray Seidel, Jr., M.D., has a high-volume, diverse and geographically distributed practice. He often sees 50 to 60 patients per day (in the winter months) between his primary office in Ruidoso (population 12,000) and a clinic 25 miles away in Capitan (population 850).

Burdened by paper charts, Dr. Seidel could not efficiently track patient records between two offices, bill completely for services or schedule follow-up treatments for patients. Dr. Seidel tackled this challenge with electronic health record (EHR) and scheduling solutions from McKesson. After implementing these solutions, he gained the power to boost productivity and improve his financial outlook. With access to the right information at the right time and improved documentation at the point of care, Dr. Seidel sees more patients, avoids undercoding for the services he provides and has increased revenue.

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges Dr. Seidel faced was access to patient records from the various medical facilities. He typically transported the paper files from one location to the next, a system that was far from foolproof.

Like other physicians, Dr. Seidel also struggled with mastering the organizational skills required to deal with a high volume of information. He frequently had to rely on patients to schedule their next visit or come back for lab or test results. Undercoding was also a problem in the practice's paper-based environment.

Answers

Dr. Seidel made the transition from paper to electronic charts with the implementation of McKesson's Practice Partner® Patient Records EHR and Practice Partner® Appointment Scheduler automated scheduling system. (Practice Partner versions 9.1 and 9.2.1 from McKesson are CCHIT CertifiedSM products for CCHIT Ambulatory EHR 2006 and 2007.)

By transitioning from a paper to an electronic environment, he eliminated transcription expenses and reduced his staff overhead. He improved his productivity during patient visits allowing him to see more patients, which increased revenue. In addition, the ability to access patient records remotely ensures Dr. Seidel has the right chart at all times. That access, combined with the speech recognition function and robust templates, allows him to quickly and accurately complete charting responsibilities.

Case Study

"When I leave the exam room, 95% of the time the patient chart is complete, billing is finished and everything is documented. I rely heavily on the Practice Partner templates to keep me highly productive."

Dr. Walter Seidel

Rio Pecos Family Practice

"When I leave the exam room, 95% of the time the patient chart is complete, billing is finished and everything is documented," he explains. "I rely heavily on the Practice Partner templates to keep me highly productive. What I can't cover with templates, I supplement with the speech recognition/dictation functionality."

Dr. Seidel also uses the internal messaging system available in Practice Partner. "If my staff needs to ask me something, they can shoot me a message. I can quickly respond without interrupting what I'm doing."

Additionally, the Practice Partner Patient Records solution keeps Dr. Seidel in constant contact with his staff when he is out, which alleviates the burden of finding physicians to cover his practice.

The easily customizable progress note templates also make it simple for Dr. Seidel to apply the latest research findings and care recommendations to his practice, which is especially important for his patients with chronic conditions. Further, Practice Partner Patient Records allows Dr. Seidel to edit and print patient educational materials, automatically documenting the activity so it can be factored into the final bill.

"The patient teaching function is phenomenal," relays Dr. Seidel. "Patients forget 80% of what you tell them. Now, I can print out the built-in, customizable patient education sheets. The system documents that I've provided patient education, which enables me to bill a higher code."

Results

Since implementing Practice Partner Patient Records, he has fewer instances of undercoding, resulting in an improved revenue stream. Additionally, Dr. Seidel's use of the system's templates combined with speech recognition have increased productivity to the point that billing and documentation are complete by the time he leaves the exam room in 95% of cases. As a result, he can see four to eight patients per hour (depending on the complexity of the patients) with no reduction in the quality of care.

"I consistently finish in the top 5% among physicians in the Ruidoso-Capitan area in terms of revenue," Dr. Seidel says. "I'm finishing very well because I have this EHR system. I can't reinforce enough how productive it makes me."

McKesson Provider Technologies

5995 Windward Parkway
Alpharetta, GA 30005

<http://www.mckesson.com>
1.800.981.8601

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