

Case Study

PracticePoint Chart in Practice

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Opening a Practice without Paper Charts

Like most pediatricians, I love children. Unlike most, I don't like paper medical charts. When I opened Pediatric Wellness of Lisle, Illinois three years ago, I never created a paper chart. Ever. I took the advice of my husband and used an electronic health records system from the very beginning. And I must admit, this has been one of the best business and clinical decisions I have made.

During my search for the right EHR for my practice, most systems I found didn't offer what I needed, given that I deal with children. I needed a system to integrate with my existing practice management system, MediSoft. Not many vendors did. I finally found an EHR from McKesson Corporation. PracticePoint Chart was very competitively priced, an area of concern for me since I was just opening up my practice. It was flexible enough to fit my needs as a pediatrician. And it would integrate with MediSoft. I knew that I had found my solution.

Efficient from the Get Go

Pediatric Wellness has one nurse practitioner and one billing person in addition to me and we all do our own work in PracticePoint Chart. Starting out with electronic charts has made our office workflow much easier than what I have experienced with offices that use a paper system. We take less time performing office tasks and feel up-to-date with all of our work. If there is something special we need to be reminded of, there is a trigger in the note to check for milestones and to make sure we cover each developmental stage. This assures us that the right questions are asked to the parent and we have a much more complete, accurate note.

I can sit in my office and access important patient information quickly, because I don't have to flip through paper. I can search for information by month, or by problem, and look at growth charts, all from the convenience of my chair. We have PCs in each exam room, so we can enter the data when the patient is in the room, saving a lot of time on typing and reviewing notes. The wording of the notes can be customized while I am seeing patients and don't require much extra work on my part. Once I have typed in how I like the wording, it is there permanently.

With no charts to file we all go home after the last patient is seen. At that point, all notes have been typed into the system and no extra work is required. A friend was coming to meet me after work and knew I had to finish my notes. She said she would allow an hour. I told her I only needed 15 minutes and she was shocked at how little time I spent on typing notes at the end of the day.

And when I go home at night, I never worry about losing my charts due to a fire or other disaster. We backup all information every night by downloading onto a separate database. We also have a backup for billing and medical records.

Saving a Thousand Words and Then Some

Any paper charts that come in from other offices are downloaded into PracticePoint Chart and stored in envelopes on the only storage shelf we have in the office. This helps us utilize our office space efficiently and not waste it on paper files.

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We have virtually no supplies to order since we don't use paper charts around the office. We have never made a paper chart on any of our new patients.

Also, because of PracticePoint Chart, we do not need the services of a transcriptionist. This is saving us approximately \$25,000 a year, based on a national average yearly salary.

In addition, we are paid for what we do. With PPC, we have been able to effectively and efficiently deal with insurance denials on claims. If we need to, we can quickly download the entire note and send it to the insurance company in response to a denial. It is very hard for the insurance company to deny a claim when they can clearly see what led up to the treatment and the chronology of what happened with the patient. I have been audited by an insurance company and received 98% accuracy, something not many doctors with paper can claim. We strive to achieve 100% accuracy and feel confident that we will achieve this at our next audit.

I also feel satisfied that I am complying with the privacy and security regulations of HIPAA, especially since we have no paper records lying around on desks. Only authorized users can access our patient information.

My practice has different needs since I serve children and there were many customizations I needed to make. The support staff have been open to my suggestions and have been very helpful in fine-tuning the system for pediatrics. I suggested that they have a protocol sheet to incorporate all the things we had to change for other pediatrician's offices. They were very receptive to my ideas.

A function that I use almost daily is the graphics. Pictures and formats of certain medical conditions came pre-loaded in the system. If there is a certain rash I need to describe for my notes, there are pictures to choose from, which is much quicker than describing the rash in detail. You can also click on a picture of the body to show where the rash is.

You don't have to be computer savvy to use this system. We enter our demographic and insurance information into our practice management system MediSoft, and it interfaces with PracticePoint Chart and puts all of the data right into the chart. It was very easy for my staff and me to learn how the program works. I have access to the system from home and can dial into the network through XP and link through the IP address. I still do all the physician functions as I did before, only now I can read the note and the notes are entered much quicker.

PracticePoint Chart has given me great flexibility in running my practice. It also gave me the confidence to open my own practice without feeling run down by paper. I don't feel controlled by HIPAA or insurance denials. Everything is easily accessed and completely accurate. I can not imagine ever using paper after having used such an efficient program.

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