

Eye & Laser Physicians

An EHR & Practice Management Success Story

ophthalmology
ADVANTAGE™

The Problem: Practice Growth Outstripping Ability to Manage Charts

"When I had to purchase 10 rolling carts to handle the stacks of charts we were moving around every day, I knew it was time for a change," says George Gunshefski, administrator for Eye & Laser Physicians, a comprehensive ophthalmology practice in Walla Walla, Washington. Linda Gunshefski, MD, who also happens to be his sister, had bought out the practice she worked in for 10 years and was growing it successfully - but at a cost. "She was staying late every night and working on the weekends from home to keep up with charts," says George Gunshefski.

The Solution: Streamline Practice Flow with Compulink's Ophthalmology Advantage™

"When he began investigating electronic health records (EHR) systems, customizability rapidly became a top priority. "The doctor has strong feelings about the order in which the components of an ophthalmic exam should be performed," he says. "Of all the systems we considered, Compulink was the only one customizable enough to structure the exam the way she wanted it." Another attractive feature was the tight integration of practice management and EHR. "If there's a problem, I want to be able to call one company to fix it, not get 3 different vendors to agree on whose problem it is," says Gunshefski. Plus, Compulink offers more ophthalmic device and related interfaces than anyone else in the industry. "Everything is streamlined, because our diagnostic devices, medical exams, optical shop, and VSP and electronic claims are all connected," he says. The practice launched Advantage/EHR in December, 2008.

The Result: Greater Practice Efficiency and Reclaimed Personal Time

"Since implementing EHR we've been able to increase the patient case load by 5 patients per day, while at the same time cutting back on staff and physician hours," says Gunshefski. The scribes can click through an exam faster than they could write it down. "We reduce the need for typing by having the system automatically populate the patient record with anything the doctor says frequently," Gunshefski says. The autophoropter interface also saves time and reduces errors by pulling refractions directly into the patient record. "At the end of the exam, the doctor dictates her treatment plan and signs off on the chart right away, and the scribe posts the claim from the exam room, so the stacks of charts have been eliminated," he says. "When we are out watching her sons play ball after work, I know we did the right thing."

The practice also eliminated a file clerk position and one of two billers, for a considerable annual savings. "We love doing e-claims and remittances through Compulink. The per-claim fee is a fraction of the cost of a full-time billing employee - and we have fewer errors and lost claims, so we get paid faster," he says.

Pearls for Success

Practice, practice, practice. "When people are used to doing something a certain way, it takes time for them to change, so give yourself plenty of practice time on the front end to ensure a smooth transition," Gunshefski says. He scheduled practice sessions at least once a week. He also won buy-in by offering 'Friends & Family Fridays' where staff members could bring people in for a free exam while they practiced using the system.

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