

Midwestern University's Arizona College of Optometry *An EHR & Practice Management Success Story*

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The Problem: Launch a 21st Century Optometry School

When Midwestern University's Arizona College of Optometry (AZCOPT) opened the doors last year to its inaugural class of optometry students, college administrators knew it was important to embrace the future of health care from the start. "New optometry students are already very facile with all types of electronic systems—to require them to document exams on paper would really be a step backwards," says Assistant Dean for Clinical Education, Christina Sorenson, OD, FAAO. While the students are learning ocular anatomy and clinical care she wants them to also get a feel for real-world optometric practice. "Learning how to do everything electronically, from billing to patient care and electronic prescribing, is extremely valuable for our students because it reflects the way they will practice in the future," she says. AZCOPT's challenge was to find the best system for their school even before they had students—and get it up and running quickly.

The Solution: A Comprehensive, Customizable EHR System

AZCOPT chose Compulink's Eyecare Advantage™ because it was the most comprehensive system available. "Not only does it incorporate every aspect of patient data management, from scheduling to exams to billing, but it can accommodate the very broad range of exam types and services needed in an academic setting," Dr. Sorenson says. The school is in good company—12 of the 19 U.S.-based optometric schools use Compulink.

Another feature Dr. Sorenson likes is Compulink's 150+ ophthalmic interfaces that integrate data and images directly into the patient record. "For an academic institution that wants to be able to track and analyze as many data points as possible, interfaces are much more valuable than simply scanning in tests," she says.

And finally, customizability is what makes Compulink the perfect fit for any setting. "Compulink does a wonderful job of providing very functional, eye care-specific templates," says Dr. Sorenson. "But you can customize those templates even further based on your specific areas of emphasis and workflow patterns." Even something as simple as binocular vision measurements can be organized differently, depending on whether they are part of a sports vision exam, pediatric case, or rehabilitation after traumatic brain injury. Many of AZCOPT's exam protocols and EHR screens are still under development as the school prepares to open its new clinic, but from Dr. Sorenson's experience thus far, she is confident that Eye Care Advantage can do whatever she asks of it.

The Result: A Well-Prepared Student Body

Dr. Sorenson's students are already learning more about how to manage the business of eye care than many of their predecessors did. "Once you understand the Compulink system, you quickly realize how many applications there are for the data," she explains. "Custom reports help students and faculty analyze clinical performance, patient flow, and even the financial viability of certain clinics or services. Once you have that data, it's really powerful."

Pearls for Success

"Spend some time carefully outlining what you need for each type of exam before you even look at the screens," says Dr. Sorenson. "Then you'll be equipped to review them intelligently and define the changes you'd like to make." She also suggests that doctors give some thought as to how they might use exam data in new ways—to provide better care, perhaps, or run a more efficient practice. "A private practice might not need as many data points as we do, but I would encourage everyone to be forward thinking about the potential uses for the data in the future," she says.

SUCCESS

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