

Golden Vision Clinic

An EHR & Practice Management Success Story

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The Problem: Keep Pace with the Evolution of EHR Technology

Golden, Colo. optometrist Sam Baron has successfully ridden the health care information technology wave since he first started using computers in his solo practice in 1983. Since then, this early adopter has weathered the move from computer-generated labels to rudimentary patient records, to a full-fledged EHR system. "My motto has always been, "Regenerate or retire," says Dr. Baron. "Using the latest features to further automate is one way to regenerate my investment in EHR," he says. "My goal is to spend less time clicking and more time building patient relationships and providing good clinical care."

The Solution: Compulink's Smart Functions for Next-Generation Automation

Fortunately, the EHR vendor Dr. Baron chose back in 1995 has proven to be the leader in EHR for eye care practitioners. "I was impressed with Compulink back then and the company has just continued to expand the depth and sophistication of its EHR software ever since," says Dr. Baron. He says the latest innovation, Smart Functions, takes office automation to a much more robust level.

When he sees a patient with blepharitis and cataracts, for example, the Smart Functions Dr. Baron has created in Eyecare Advantage™ will automatically fill in the diagnosis codes and treatment plans he has specified, generate a prescription, print a fax sheet for the surgery center, create an accurate, detailed letter for the patient's general practitioner, and pull up a 3-D eye image to help him explain the condition to the patient. "You can't get more efficient than that," he says. "The effort and expertise Compulink has put into developing features like this are really breaking down the technological barriers that prevented us from maximizing EHR efficiencies in the past."

The Results: Doing Even More in Less Time

"I could do all those things before, but not as fast, and not without a lot more time at the computer," says Dr. Baron. Just to write a letter to another doctor used to take him a half-hour to dictate, then he had to have staff type it, re-read and sign it. Like many doctors, the end of his workday meant another couple hours of dictation and records review. "Now, when I'm done with my exam, I'm also done with the planning, coding, prescriptions and orders, and communication with other doctors," he says. "Automation allows me to establish the correct protocols for patient care and then ensure that my staff and I follow those protocols every time, so the consistency of care actually improves."

Pearls for Success

Dr. Baron has mentored a number of clinicians who are looking into getting an EHR or practice management system. "Keep in mind that where you start is often not where you end up," he advises. "A lot of doctors choose the cheapest option because they think they only need it for recalls and prescriptions," he explains. But later, when they want to generate reports or letters to other doctors—or move into EHR—they find their system simply doesn't have the capabilities they need. He says it's better to be forward thinking: "If there is any chance you might want to race the car in the future, choose one that is built for power and speed, even if you intend to drive slowly at first."

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