

Total Eye Care

An EHR & Practice Management Success Story

eyecare
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The Problem: A Low Return on Marketing Investments

Richard Driscoll, OD, is a longtime proponent of electronic health records (EHR). As the owner of Total Eye Care with offices in Colleyville and Keller, Texas, he's been using Compulink's Eyecare Advantage/EHR™ for 10 years and says his small practice has benefitted tremendously from going paperless. But he suspected there were even more gains to be made. "Over time, we've collected a lot of data," says Dr. Driscoll. "I started to realize that we could be doing more with that data to increase revenues and lower our marketing costs."

The Solution: Take Advantage of Compulink's Powerful Marketing Capabilities

He began using Compulink's email and Internet marketing capabilities to send out customized communications to patients. "It's much cheaper to send out electronic newsletters and surveys than paper ones, and the response rate is higher," he says. "Plus, we can track who opens the message, which links they click on, and to whom are they forwarded."

The practice has just started using Patient Web Registration so when patients fill out their contact information and medical history online, the information is available for import into the patient record. "Our patients love this option," says Dr. Driscoll. It saves the patient about 20 minutes filling out forms in the waiting room and eliminates the time technicians spent re-entering data into the EHR. "An added bonus is that most patients enter their email addresses online, which allows you to more efficiently market to your patients," he says.

Dr. Driscoll has taken customization of his EHR system to the next level by identifying specific data points he needs to gain insight into his patient population. "Just by adding the question, 'How did you hear about our practice?' We discovered that Internet referrals were higher than expected, while Yellow Page referrals were almost nil," he says. One of the reasons he chose Compulink is that practitioners and staff can easily customize screens themselves. "If there is some variable or characteristic you want to track, you should be able to add a field or restructure a tab to do that," says Dr. Driscoll. "If your system can't be customized or the vendor has to do everything for you, you'll never be able to get the data you want."

The Results: Increased Revenues and Lower Marketing Expenses

When Total Eye Care received its annual \$7,000 bill for the Yellow Pages ad this year, Dr. Driscoll says it was an easy decision to cut that expenditure. "A one-minute report demonstrated that those ads were responsible for only \$7,000 in revenue. Clearly the ads were not cost effective," he says. "Without the data in my EHR, I probably would have assumed that Yellow Page ads were effective."

Data mining allows Dr. Driscoll to market efficiently to specific types of patients who can benefit from new products or additional services. "For example we can target recalls to patients with an IOP >20 mmHg whose last visit was more than a year ago so those patients get the follow-up they need," he says. "When a new multifocal contact lens was introduced, I was able to send an announcement to all our 40- to 65-year-old patients who were current or former contact lens wearers. We could never cull that kind of information from paper records," he says

Pearls for Success

"I know some doctors think EHR is too expensive for a small practice, but I couldn't disagree more," he says. "EHR has helped us work more efficiently with fewer people; it adds value to the practice for future sale purposes; and it provides medicolegal protection because my staff and I are much less likely to make errors or forget to write down important details."

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