

DeKalb Optometric Associates

A Practice Management & EHR Success Story

The Problem: A Failed Conversion to OfficeMate

With 4 optometrists, 11 staff, and a 60-year track record of providing comprehensive eye care, DeKalb Optometric Associates is one of the most respected practices in northern Illinois. But when Victor Verbic, OD, joined the practice in 2008, he found a billing system in complete disarray. In an effort to cut costs, the practice had switched from Compulink's practice management software to Eyefinity®/OfficeMate®.

The conversion had gone badly. Leger balances and credits were mixed up and the office was sending out erroneous patient bills. "We were on the phone constantly with OfficeMate, but they simply weren't willing or able to solve the conversion problems," Dr. Verbic says.

The Solution: A Return to Compulink's Eyecare Advantage

After three months of headaches, DeKalb Optometric decided to abandon the OfficeMate software and return to Compulink. "Our immediate need was to get billing back on track," says Dr. Verbic. "But we also needed a solution that could support the transition we were planning to electronic health records (EHR)."

"From having previously worked with Compulink, I knew that Compulink's Advantage/EHR™ was highly customizable and that I would be able to make the screens look exactly like my paper record, change wording in drop-down menus, add new fields, and create 'smart' scripts to prevent errors. When I did the OfficeMate demo, it was clear to me I wouldn't be able to make any of those changes to ExamWRITER®. And for us, it was absolutely critical to have a system that we could change as needed."

The Results: Increased Revenues, Happy Patients, & a Successful Transition to EHR

Dr. Verbic says they quickly got their billing back in order and even started using many of the software features they hadn't taken advantage of previously, such as e-claims through Emdeon. "Auto posting and auto remittance have saved us huge amounts of staff time and improved accuracy, vastly decreasing our rate of rejected claims. Plus, we get far fewer calls from patients confused about or upset by their bills," he says. He calls Compulink's Optical Rx feature, "Nothing short of life changing. Compulink helped us build all our insurance tables so that the system can accurately price out frame and lens orders for each vision plan with just the click of a button. Because of that, our optical shop revenues have gone way up."

He also began the transition to EHR, something that turned out to be far less painful than expected. "I think most doctors are afraid EHR will slow them down, but I can absolutely document an exam, especially for an established patient, faster than I could on paper," says Dr. Verbic. "Everything is set up exactly as I like, so I only have to type a few words, at most. Contact lens re-orders take just seconds, and my reimbursements are up because the system verifies exam coding. It's a huge advantage to know that you aren't undercoding or leaving out details that are necessary to substantiate your charges in the event of an audit," he says. "I feel confident that Compulink can help our practice grow and, more importantly, grow with us as our needs change."

Pearls for Success

"I think the lesson learned is that 'cheaper' often just means the software doesn't have all the features you need," Verbic says. "Even if we had been able to straighten out the billing, we discovered that OfficeMate just didn't work well for a multi-doctor practice and its EHR didn't support our needs. When it comes to selecting a system, you really need to be thinking long-term — where your practice will be in five or ten years."

SUCCESS

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