



CASE STUDY

After a long search, sports medicine practice reaches for the right EMR

ORGANIZATION

Boulder Institute for Sports Medicine, an orthopedic surgery practice in Boulder, Colorado.

OBJECTIVE

Improve access to patient charts, manage patient visits and procedures more efficiently, reduce costs related to paper and office supplies, find an EMR solution suitable to the needs of a sports medicine practice.

SOLUTION

Complement existing MicroMD® PM practice management system with MicroMD EMR from Henry Schein Medical Systems.

Objective

Tracking down medical records and locating misfiled charts can be a constant struggle for any practice. For an orthopedic surgeon like Dr. Halbrecht, the frustrations of dealing with paper charts were magnified.

“Particularly when you perform a lot of procedures with assistants, technicians, and schedulers all needing access to the chart, it can be a logistical nightmare,” says Dr. Halbrecht. She was typically seeing 100 patients per week, 30 of them new patients. In addition, she was performing about 300 surgeries annually.

Charts are expensive to assemble, print and store. “You have to pay someone to physically pull a chart, match up a physical therapy note and deliver it to the doctor,” says Dr. Halbrecht. Like any sports medicine office, Boulder Institute wanted to stay busy seeing patients, not building charts and stocking office supplies.

Solution

Over the years, Dr. Halbrecht observed the EMR marketplace as products matured. “For so long, EMRs that were designed for internists were peddled to surgeons and other specialists,” she explains. “So they had a lot of nice features and modules that we wouldn’t need. To me, they just made the software more complicated and more expensive.”

In addition to simplicity and affordability, Dr. Halbrecht wanted a solution with pre-built documentation templates that she could customize for sports medicine. Having heard horror stories from some of her colleagues, she was also cautious about implementation services and ongoing support. Dr. Halbrecht had been pleased with MicroMD PM for practice management, so Boulder Institute deployed MicroMD EMR in August 2007.

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- Joanne Halbrecht

MD, FAAOS
Boulder Institute for Sports
Medicine, PC

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Case Study Results



Solution continued

Due to the nature of her orthopedic practice, Dr. Halbrecht chose not to scan and transfer old paper charts. “[Henry Schein] said, ‘We want to do what works best for you,’” recalls Dr. Halbrecht. “The implementation was so much easier than I anticipated.”



Results

Boulder Institute has recovered more than 40 hours a week in staff time. “When a physical therapist calls, for example, we don’t have to put them on hold while we pull a chart or call them back and start a game of phone tag,” explains Dr. Halbrecht, describing the cost-savings and productivity improvement.

“If I spend 30 more seconds with the chart and finish it during or just after the visit, then I’m done with that chart,” says Dr. Halbrecht. “At the end of the day, I’ll have maybe two or three charts to finish instead of 10 or 15.” With this kind of efficiency, Dr. Halbrecht now employs a part-time, rather than a full-time, office manager, and she has resumed doing her own bookkeeping.

Working with MicroMD EMR, Dr. Halbrecht and her staff got a head start on designing templates for capturing new patient visits, follow-up visits, and post-op visits. “With MicroMD EMR, we got an integrated EMR that was simple to use and customize. When my office manager showed me how to modify and create templates, I felt it was almost ridiculous that I hadn’t been doing them sooner,” says Dr. Halbrecht. “My orthopedic technician couldn’t believe how easy it was.”

Dr. Halbrecht and her staff use the electronic forms in MicroMD EMR to great effect: “We work with about 20 different physical therapy facilities. Instead of keeping track of 20 different prescription pads, we just use one basic form with versions for each facility.” Ordering MRI studies is also streamlined. Dr. Halbrecht initiates a form that the receptionist can complete and print for the patient.

MicroMD EMR even assists with E&M coding. “I’ve added all my bullet points to the template, so I’m sure to document those services appropriately,” says Dr. Halbrecht. “MicroMD EMR automatically captures the duration of the visit.”

“There’s a big fear out there, even among more progressive doctors. They say they’re not ready for an EMR and worry about not realizing the cost-savings. After I tell them about my experience, a lot of them say, ‘Well, I need to take a look at Henry Schein.’”

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Director of Operations
The Consult, Inc.



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