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Small Practice Uses HIT Subscription Model to Enable Growth with EHR/PM

Justin D. Puckett, DO, received medical training as many practitioners do—using paper charts and handwritten prescriptions. However, during his residency, he encountered exciting electronic and technological alternatives to handling patient information, and saw how these solutions could benefit his future practice. “I trained with the paper charts, and saw the inaccuracies of handwriting, tickler files, and systems that lacked the flexibility to track a patient’s entire history,” explains Dr. Puckett. That’s why, from the moment he began his small family medicine practice Dr. Puckett sought innovative technologies for every branch of his office.

In 2009, when launching his practice, Dr. Puckett started researching EHR and practice management solutions. He needed flexible technology designed to help his primary care practice grow. “I met with sales representatives, conducted online research, and met with my staff and other healthcare providers to gather lists of ‘must-have,’ ‘nice-to-have,’ and ‘want-to-avoid’ features,” explains Dr. Puckett. “While it was ultimately my decision, I wanted to gather as much input as possible from those who would have to work with the software. I asked for the top five features needed from the front desk, billing, nurses, and the provider level, which gave us a great foundation to start our search.”



Overview

PRACTICE

Justin D. Puckett, DO
Complete Family Medicine, LLC
Kirksville, MO

PRACTICE PROFILE

Complete Family Medicine, LLC—owned by Justin Puckett, DO—is a rapidly growing small practice. Within a year of opening, Dr. Puckett hired another physician and a nurse practitioner to join his team. Areas of focus include early obstetrics, all aspects of pediatrics, adult, and senior care.

BUSINESS PROBLEM

After receiving his medical training using a paper-centric and labor intensive health record and patient management model, Dr. Puckett decided to open his practice using more up-to-date technology. Because Dr. Puckett wanted to avoid a paper-based model—and needed access to accurate, patient records outside of his office—he sought an EHR and practice management solution capable of meeting his requirements and solidly launching his practice out of the gate.

SOLUTION

To maintain efficient handling of patient information and streamline documentation—while cost-effectively obtaining integrated PQRI capabilities and ePrescribing functionality—Dr. Puckett chose NextGen Healthcare’s Software-as-a-Service model to implement NextGen® Practice Management and NextGen® Ambulatory EHR.

PRODUCT DISTINCTIONS

- Content covering over 26 specialty areas
- Remote, secure patient data access
- ePrescribing functionality
- Easy interfacing with other health facilities
- Continuous system enhancements

BENEFITS

- Gained a flexible solution at a fixed monthly fee
- Enhanced patient care via streamlined processes
- Leveraged a fast, efficient implementation methodology
- Created a highly efficient collections process
- Integrate with other health facilities
- Access to latest patient information, regardless of location

NEXTGEN
HEALTHCARE

Selecting a cost-efficient, integrated billing and clinical system

Throughout the process, it was a high priority to find a service provider dedicated to continually upgrading and improving its solutions, while offering highly flexible products. During the research process, Dr. Puckett discovered that, as an alternative to purchasing a solution, NextGen Healthcare offered a competitively-priced Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) subscription model for its integrated NextGen® Ambulatory EHR and NextGen® Practice Management system. He felt the solution packaged everything his practice would need to go to the next level of healthcare technology—and fortunately did so at a fixed monthly fee.

The SaaS offering includes: hosting, implementation, training, maintenance, image scanning, client support, and access to NexGen Ambulatory EHR and/or Practice Management software.

According to Dr. Puckett, “As a small practice just starting out, the ability to use the latest version of the product without spending a fortune is huge. Regular upgrades keep us up-to-date and ensure our patient information is accessible. That’s why we chose a NextGen solution.”

Implementation at your speed

As soon as Complete Family Medical teamed up with NextGen Healthcare, a dedicated implementation team was assigned to start working with the practice. “Weekly status calls with our NextGen implementation specialist helped our staff build the system into our workflow,” says Dr. Puckett. “This was a whole new world for us. Starting a practice was intense and exhausting at times, but the implementation process took place at our speed. We phased the solutions in gently. It was critical that NextGen Healthcare was right there with us. Remarkably, we were fully up and running with NextGen Practice Management within two months from the time of purchase. With the EHR, we began a phased approach, starting with electronic prescribing and tasking. In less than a year, we were fully implemented on NextGen Ambulatory EHR.”

Improving care with flexible, secure technology

“The SaaS model’s flexibility was very appealing,” explains Dr. Puckett. “With two doctors and a nurse practitioner in the organization, we need to easily see each other’s patients. NextGen Ambulatory EHR and NextGen Practice Management allow us to do this with ease.” Obtaining an in-depth solution addressing a multitude of specialty areas was critical. Complete Family Medical covers early obstetrics, all aspects of pediatrics, adult, and senior care, so it needed a system that was ready to go out of the box, yet flexible enough to be modified to its unique needs.

Dr. Puckett adds, “I frequently travel, making secure access to a patient’s history via the Internet extremely important. I need to be able to approve medication issues from anywhere. If I have to admit a patient in the middle of the night, having access to the latest patient chart from home allows me to offer better quality of care. NextGen delivered on all points.”

Achieving a new level of patient care: electronic prescribing

Dr. Puckett saw an immediate improvement in patient care when his practice started using NextGen® software’s electronic prescribing capabilities. “Once the prescription is electronically submitted to the pharmacy, the drug interaction check takes place. The pharmacist doesn’t need to double check someone’s handwriting. This means that the patient has a smoother interaction with our office and the pharmacist. Patient notes go right to my inbox, making chronic medication needs and health maintenance easier to discuss with the patient,” explains Dr. Puckett.

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Managing the practice with ease and efficiency

With its NextGen® solution, Complete Family Medical created a highly efficient collections process to help balance accounts as quickly as possible. What's more, the practice's administrative costs are low thanks to its highly organized approach—information is stored in the same format, eliminating the need to reformat it for different departments. Finally, integration with other health facilities and hospitals is extremely efficient. Complete Family Medical can share lab results and EKG reports.

The power of a successful partnership

NextGen Healthcare welcomes its clients' product enhancement ideas. Dr. Puckett explains, "Several of our suggestions have already been incorporated in the software. It's great to see a software provider seeking our ideas and acting upon them. This type of responsiveness shows the power of our partnership and gives me confidence about what lies ahead."

Preparing for Meaningful Use requirements

"In my experience, NextGen Healthcare was the first EHR provider ready for pay-for-performance initiatives—including the government's stimulus incentives. I've seen proof of that commitment," states Dr. Puckett. "Partnering with NextGen Healthcare allows my small practice to be ready for whatever incentives come down the road for Meaningful Use. To be able to offer that to a small practice is absolutely critical. It provides great peace of mind knowing that NextGen Healthcare—through cutting-edge technology and ongoing guidance—is focused on helping its clients address today's challenges, as well as prepare for the future of healthcare."



