

Case Study

Cardiovascular Group Saving Over \$700,000 Through NextGen Technology Improvements

Unhappy with its existing practice management system, Cardiovascular Associates of Southeastern Pennsylvania (CASEP) wanted a change. Chief Executive Officer at CASEP, Melissa Mabry, explains, “We were dissatisfied with our existing practice management system, so we established several task forces—which included Billing, Administration, Physicians, Staff, Managers, and IT—to research vendors.”

CASEP wanted a combined practice management and EHR solution to streamline and improve communications and operations. “We continually heard other cardiology practices warning about potential upgrade and communication issues that crop up when two separate vendors and products need to interface. After a detailed analysis, our task force narrowed the options down to 3 finalists. NextGen Healthcare won our business hands down among all teams,” says Mabry.

There are several key reasons CASEP chose an integrated NextGen EHR and NextGen enterprise practice management (EPM) solution. As Mabry explains, other vendors didn’t offer reporting capabilities with as much power or ease-of-use, and their offerings weren’t as flexible or customizable. Plus, NextGen Healthcare had a proven cardiology solution and a successful installed base in cardiology—other technology providers didn’t.



Overview

PRACTICE

Cardiovascular Associates of Southeastern Pennsylvania (CASEP)
www.casep.com

PRACTICE PROFILE

For over 30 years, CASEP cardiologists have been providing individualized care in all aspects of cardiovascular disease, including subspecialties in electrophysiology, echocardiography, interventional cardiology, and peripheral vascular disease.

BUSINESS PROBLEM

Unhappy with its existing practice management solution, CASEP wanted a new system that would integrate with an EHR solution. It sought a combined solution to help lower costs and enhance patient care, while improving efficiencies and reporting.

SOLUTION

CASEP went live on NextGen® EPM software in February 2007 and implemented NextGen EHR software at its first site in June 2008. The practice has ten sites live on NextGen EPM, seven sites live on NextGen EHR—and three more sites scheduled to go live on the EHR system.

PRODUCT DISTINCTIONS

- Better clinical documentation and coding
- Improved PQRI reporting
- Cardiology-specific content and modules
- Enhanced—and more secure—access to patient data

BENEFITS

- Eliminated 100% of office dictation, saving \$184,000 to date
- Once all sites roll out, anticipate \$200,000 in transcription savings
- Reduced transfer of clinical charges from 3-4 days to 24 hours, shaving 2-3 days off revenue cycle
- Reduced FTEs by 6, saving \$300,000 to date, with another \$200,000 expected
- Enabled significant efficiency and reporting improvements
- Enhanced patient care through better, faster data access and documentation

NEXTGEN
HEALTHCARE INFORMATION SYSTEMS

“What’s more, we were comfortable with NextGen Healthcare’s stability in the marketplace and with the company’s demonstrated commitment to apply ongoing research and development dollars to cardiology. We felt confident that NextGen Healthcare would still be around in a decade, and not sold to the highest bidder,” says Mabry.

CASEP went live on NextGen EPM in February 2007. “Our implementation was very smooth—we went live on one day at all of the eleven sites we had at the time. We had 200 employees to train and it was a well-scripted process,” explains Mabry. CASEP implemented NextGen EHR at its first site in June 2008. Today, the practice has ten sites live on NextGen EPM, seven sites live on NextGen EHR, and three more sites scheduled to go live on the EHR system.



Reducing costs and improving efficiencies

Streamlined documentation and improved information access

As CASEP cardiologist, Dr. Richard Hunn, explains, “Achieving easy access to information is the biggest benefit of using the NextGen system. In a paper world, there were plenty of times we needed information and the chart was missing or incomplete. With our EHR system, that doesn’t happen.”

In a large practice with multiple offices, NextGen EHR software helps streamline operations. “In a paper world, it was a mess trying to move charts. With an EHR solution, the data is always right there in front of you. There are no more headaches. Plus, the NextGen system is extremely easy to use and I’m very comfortable finding what I need,” explains Dr. Hunn.

Ready information access improves care

“NextGen EHR helps ensure better documentation so we can avoid the mistakes and inaccuracies that are nearly impossible to prevent with dictation,” confirms Dr. Hunn.

In addition, today, it’s more efficient for CASEP to stay on top of patient testing. Dr. Hunn explains, “NextGen EHR helps me track patient testing, quickly view results, and easily evaluate them—such as with cholesterol panels. I’m always informed, so I can provide better care.”

NextGen EHR delivers tangible benefits to patients. “Because documentation is electronic—and dictating isn’t necessary anymore—I can spend more time focusing on the patient than I did with paper charts. Also, doctors don’t always communicate well with one another, and the EHR solution solves that problem—especially when a patient’s primary care physician needs to see the outcome of my evaluation, which is now available as soon as I submit it,” says Dr. Hunn.

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Lowered costs

Since going live on NextGen EHR, CASEP eliminated 100% of its dictation during patients' office visits, which has saved the practice \$184,000 to date. CASEP estimates a total transcription savings of \$200,000 once all sites are rolled out this year. What's more, testing and procedure dictation is expected to be eliminated pending the release of diagnostic templates. "We anticipate this will result in an additional \$100,000 in reduced annual costs," explains Mabry.

With its NextGen Healthcare solution, CASEP is able to transfer clinical charges electronically using documentation in its EHR software. "This alone enabled our practice to reduce the amount of time needed to submit charges from 3-4 days from time of service to a maximum 24 hour turn-around time, shaving 2-3 days off our revenue cycle. What's more, we eliminated the cost of postage, envelopes, and letterhead—those costs are huge in an organization like ours that processes hundreds of thousands of documents a day. In addition, by using NextGen EPM's Worklog Manager functionality and claims scrubbing capabilities, CASEP's denial management process is much more efficient. Our net collection ratio increased by 3%," explains Mabry.

Finally, CASEP has reduced its medical records staff by 6 full time employees (FTEs) thus far, which has resulted in \$300,000 in savings year to date. As the rest of the sites roll out, Mabry estimates that the practice will see a further reduction in 6 more FTEs, resulting in an additional \$200,000 in savings.

"[We] reduced the amount of time needed to submit charges from 3-4 days from time of service to a maximum 24 hour turn-around time. This shaved 2-3 days off our revenue cycle."

Melissa Mabry, CEO

Improved efficiencies and reporting

CASEP's new NextGen system enabled significant efficiency and reporting improvements. Mabry comments, "It was our goal to do as little customization as possible to NextGen EHR templates, and to stay as up to date as possible with the latest version of NextGen software. With few exceptions, our doctors are using NextGen EHR 'out of the box.' This is not typical among most cardiology practices using competitive technology. It speaks to the strength of NextGen Healthcare's cardiology content in meeting the majority of our needs."

Dr. Hunn adds, "I often use NextGen templates and charts on atrial fibrillation, congestive heart failure, and chest pains. It's so easy to point and click to document a patient visit."

In addition, CASEP is actively prescribing electronically and has been reporting on PQRI initiatives since January 2009. Dr. Hunn comments, "Electronic prescribing through the NextGen system is so much more convenient than paper scripts—both from our standpoint and the patient's."



Now, before a patient is checked out, CASEP doctors electronically sign and fax letters to referring physicians. This enables the practice to cut significant operations costs, such as for paper and mailing supplies. What's more, CASEP has key interfaces up and running, such as with Televox, as well as a Quest lab bi-directional interface live at 7 sites.

Another critical benefit—when a patient has an emergency on the weekends or at night, the on-call doctor can access that patient's EHR record from any off-site computer. This is a huge efficiency improvement that enables the doctor to provide better patient care.

Mabry concludes, "We're very pleased that NextGen Healthcare's products are intuitive and thereby meet the majority of our doctors' needs."

Looking ahead

Moving forward, CASEP is interested in improving its hospital interfaces and adopting a hospital charge capture system. "We feel confident that we're well-poised for the future with our current NextGen EHR and EPM solution," explains Mabry.

Dr. Hunn also believes that CASEP is well positioned for a constantly-changing healthcare environment. He comments, "Fear seems to be the number one reason that doctors hesitate to use EHR technology. But at this point, the scariest thing to me would be not having an EHR system. Bottom line is, if you're not using this technology, you'll be left behind, because the integration of services and seamless communication are key to practicing medicine today—and it will be even more important moving forward."

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