

# Case Study

## EHR Provides Much More Than Some Realize

Physicians at Cardiology of Tulsa (COT) wanted just one thing out of an electronic health records system: Access to clinical information from remote locations. But the doctors wound up getting much more than they bargained for—including improved workflow and a bevy of financial benefits—when they implemented NextGen EHR from NextGen Healthcare Information Systems, Inc.

Because cardiologists are often called upon to make split-second clinical decisions, having easy access to patient data is crucial. By installing NextGen EHR, a Windows-based system that creates and maintains complete medical records with minimal effort, the physicians at COT are now able to make well-informed decisions based on complete clinical information—and deliver better care to patients from virtually anywhere.

The system, installed in 2001, is used by the medical group's 19 physicians and 110 staff members, and is installed on 195 desktops and 20 remote and in-house laptops. In addition, users can access the system via a number of wireless connection points throughout their building.



### Overview

#### PRACTICE

Cardiology of Tulsa  
Tulsa, OK  
[www.cardiologytulsa.com](http://www.cardiologytulsa.com)

#### PRACTICE PROFILE

Nineteen cardiologists providing a full range of cardiac services, including heart transplants.

#### BUSINESS PROBLEM

A critical need for access to clinical information remotely.

#### SOLUTION

Implemented NextGen® EHR in 2001, with desktops, remote laptops, and multiple wireless connection points.

#### PRODUCT DISTINCTIONS

- Cardiology Knowledge Base Model
- Cardiac device interfacing
- Disease Management

#### BENEFITS

- Reduced staffing costs by \$641,000
- Remote access improving decisions
- More thorough patient care
- Better documentation and coding
- Staff salary and transcription savings
- Efficient chart access and use

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## Errors Be Gone

Although the doctors probably would have been satisfied with these clinical advantages alone, the system is producing many workflow and financial benefits as well, says Nancy Nelson, RN, chief administrative officer.

For example, NextGen EHR is making it much easier to handle the deluge of patient calls that come into the practice on a daily basis.

When COT was using paper charts and a patient called with a question, it would take 15 minutes to pull the chart, retrieve the information and get an answer to the patient. Now, the receptionist merely sends a message to the clinician, who opens the electronic chart and provides an answer. The entire process takes about five minutes.

Previously, 2.5 nurses were solely assigned to answer calls. These nurses currently are assigned to other areas of care. The average cost of answering a call was formerly \$3.33 but now is \$1, which amounts to an annual savings of more than \$84,000.

With NextGen EHR in place, physicians also can enter patient notes at the point of service, instead of having to dictate notes between patient visits or at the end of the day.

The streamlined process enables each physician to see an average of 12 patients per day, compared to the 8 that each doctor was caring for when working with paper charts.

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“Our physicians and staff cannot imagine going back to paper charts now that we’ve been using NextGen EHR—and in the first year alone we realized more than \$500,000 in savings.”

Nancy Nelson, RN  
*Chief Administrative Officer*

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The system also has helped COT:

- Save more than \$330,000 annually in staffing costs
- Save more than \$48,000 annually by eliminating paper chart creation for new patients
- Gain more than 1,100 square feet of revenue-generating space
- Eliminate chart requests and reduce the patient call process from 10 steps to just 2
- Reduce records staff from 11 FTEs to 4 FTEs
- Decrease transcription lag time from 2,000 minutes behind to 30 minutes behind
- Eliminate 5 transcription FTEs
- Reduce new employee orientation time for patient work-ups from eight weeks to one week

## The Next Wave

COT continued to install additional features NextGen software offers to provide their patients with the best IT solutions in healthcare. They leveraged NextGen software's robust interoperability features to interface with WelchAllyn monitoring devices, which allows seamless data transfer to the NextGen EHR system and saves the practice substantial time and resources and eliminates potential for human error.

This data stream changed the way the practice operates. COT eliminated one of the two staff members previously needed to manage testing, while speeding the process, getting patients through faster, and providing the potential to schedule more patients in a day.

With NextGen Healthcare's help, COT continues to expand. They have opened new offices since first implementing NextGen EHR and take advantage of its enterprise architecture to link the offices and share pertinent data.

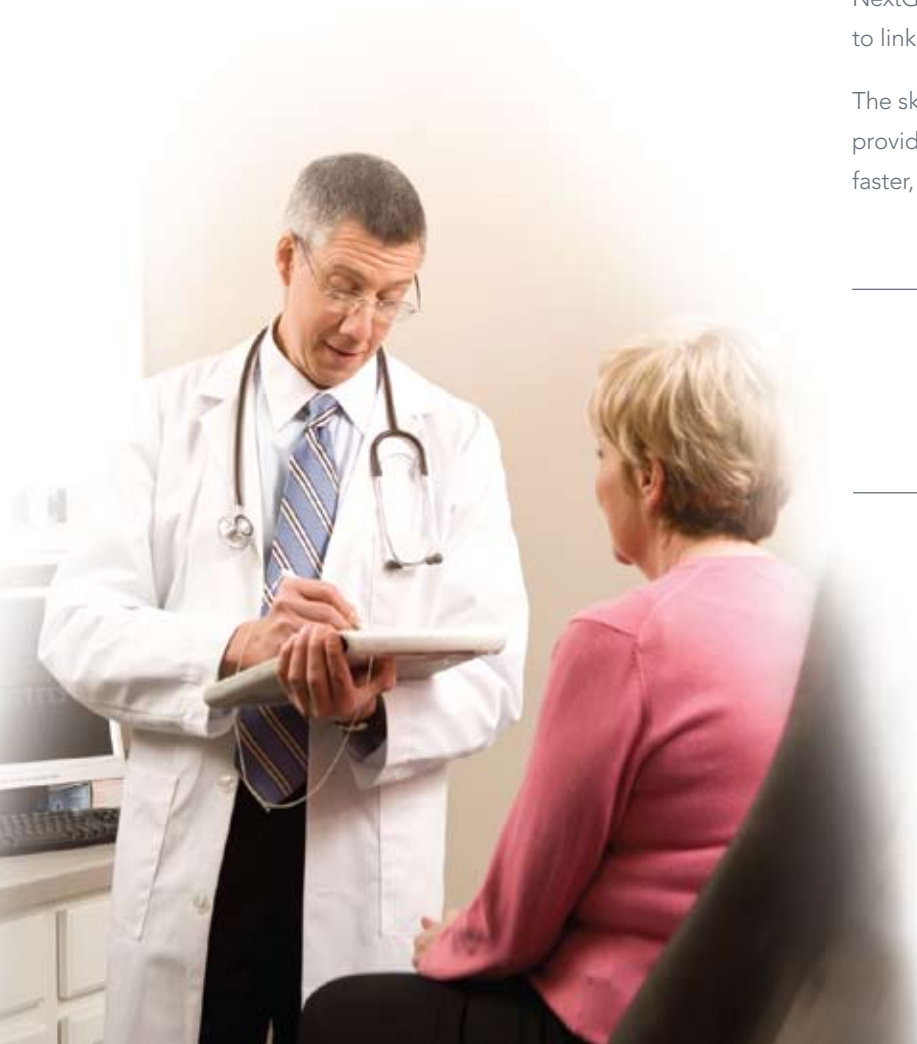
The sky is the limit for COT. NextGen Healthcare has provided the clinical IT infrastructure to guide them toward faster, more efficient patient care.

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"We pulverized 135,000  
paper charts one summer."

Michael Spain, MD

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