

Case Study >>>>

Shenandoah Community Health Significantly Improves Patient Care Quality

For community health centers (CHC) with multiple locations, ensuring continuity of patient care is at the top of the priority list. Shenandoah Community Health (SCH)—a CHC with seven offices in five West Virginia locations—is no different. As patient chart volumes escalated, continuity of care throughout SCH's locations became compromised. "We were repeating tests and prescription orders—and we couldn't always validate what medications our patients were taking," explains Lori Goforth, a SCH nurse and midwife.

After careful consideration, SCH determined that only a cutting-edge electronic health record (EHR) and enterprise practice management (EPM) solution could solve this critical challenge. As EPM/EHR project manager for SCH, Goforth sought a proven solution with a track record of success among CHCs. "We researched our options for about four years before choosing the NextGen Healthcare solution. Some of our practitioners had used EHRs in the past successfully—and we definitely tapped into that expertise and experience in our evaluation process," confirms Goforth.

SCH conducted five site visits with prospective vendors before choosing NextGen's integrated EHR and EPM solution. "We picked NextGen Healthcare primarily because the company delivers a single database with multiple site access and easy usage—not to mention a strong industry reputation," says Goforth.



Overview

PRACTICE

Shenandoah Community Health
Martinsburg, Charles Town, Ranson,
Berkeley Springs, and Winchester, WV
www.svms.net

PRACTICE PROFILE

Since 1976, Shenandoah Community Health has provided high quality, accessible, affordable health care to all age groups. The center emphasizes chronic disease management and takes pride in educating patients about good health practices.

BUSINESS PROBLEM

As patient chart volumes rapidly escalated, accurately documenting and storing patient data became increasingly difficult. As a result, continuity of patient care was compromised throughout Shenandoah Community Health's multiple locations.

SOLUTION

Implemented NextGen® EPM and NextGen® EHR to streamline office administration, improve documentation and reporting, enable positive growth, and enhance the quality of patient care.

PRODUCT DISTINCTIONS

- Improved/more secure patient data access
- Better clinical documentation/coding/billing
- Health maintenance and disease management modules
- UDS, HDC, FQHC, DOQ-IT, PQRI, and Ryan White reporting
- Specialized CHC service/training/experience
- Improved patient communications
- CHC-specific product development/enhancements

BENEFITS

- Enhanced quality of patient care
- Improved efficiencies
- Simplified reporting
- Increased funding opportunities
- Decreased costs
- Reduced risk

NEXTGEN
HEALTHCARE INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Seeking a solution with a track record of CHC success

In December 2005, SCH implemented NextGen EPM software. "Implementation and training for NextGen EPM software went very well. During the transition we successfully executed a data migration of demographic information from our previous billing system," explains Goforth.

In May 2006, SCH launched NextGen EHR. "We staged the implementation among our 40 providers at a rate of three a week," says Goforth. Simultaneously, SCH implemented the NextGen Image Control System (ICS). "We have an interface with Quest Diagnostics®, which is in the final testing stages with our local hospital for the electronic delivery of lab results," explains Goforth.

Enhancing the quality of patient care and improving efficiencies

Since implementing NextGen EPM and NextGen EHR software, SCH enjoys the following benefits:

Enhanced quality of patient care

"Today, we have instant access to patient charts no matter where we are—from home, our facilities, or the hospital. This allows our physicians to have the most up-to-date information needed to treat a patient, thereby greatly improving the continuity of care," says Goforth.

The quality of patient visits is further enhanced thanks to NextGen software's comprehensive clinical templates and workflows, which feature content for 24 different specialties. What's more, with our NextGen solution, SCH can be sure it does not repeat tests unnecessarily, thereby ensuring more accurate overall results.

SCH now views referrals, notes, prescriptions, and treatment plans within the system. Previously, with its paper system, it could take up to a week to access this information. As a result of its new process, multiple clinicians can check on a patient and get the right information, right away.

In addition, SCH uses the patient education module—which features over 4,000 healthcare advisories and reference handouts—to better serve patients. Goforth comments, "Using NextGen software's patient education module, I can tap into the Spanish translation capabilities to see—in English—what data is being generated for my Spanish-speaking patients. Before using the NextGen system, I would not have been able to verify that the educational materials I was delivering were absolutely correct."



With NextGen, SCH enjoys the following benefits:

- Enhanced quality of patient care
- Improved efficiencies
- Simplified reporting
- Increased funding opportunities
- Decreased costs
- Reduced risk

Dr. Dawn Jones—who focuses on internal medicine at SCH—concludes, “Nearly all of our existing patient records are in the system now. As a result, it is easy to review and update most patient records—and stay proactive when it comes to health maintenance and disease management. Without a doubt, we no longer have a problem searching for charts.”



Improved efficiencies

Since implementing the NextGen system, SCH improved efficiencies. “With NextGen software, we fill prescriptions faster—and answer phone messages more quickly. Before the NextGen system, we did not have the capability to deliver a ‘same-day sick clinic’ to patients. Today, thanks to a customized template that facilitates same-day sick notes, we can see 18 to 25 sick visit patients in a four hour block of time. In addition, our full time providers generally see between 24 and 30 patients in a regular eight hour day. With our overall improved access to critical patient information, delivering patient care is more thorough and efficient,” confirms Dr. Jones.

Goforth continues, “Our next big project is fine-tuning electronic remittance. I’m hoping we’ll see great time reduction in posting payments and a decreased workload demand on our staff.”

Simplified reporting

NextGen applications deliver fast, point-and-click documentation, which helps fuel SCH’s advanced reporting capabilities. For example, the system’s Family Unit Module makes it easy for SCH to group family members for reporting, billing, histories, communication, and more.

Goforth explains, “The State of West Virginia requires regular reports in order to obtain—and maintain—adequate funding. One such report entails the collection of information regarding mothers and their children. With multiple practices, it can be hard to track entire families and sufficiently connect their data. Before the NextGen system, we pulled roughly 2,000 charts and sat three nurses in a conference room for a week to track parent/child data. With NextGen software, we built a custom report for this query that runs quickly and easily,” comments Goforth.

In addition, SCH generates monthly collaborative reports with just a click of a button by tapping into NextGen software's disease management templates—such as those for hypertension, diabetes, and asthma. Goforth concludes, "This is the second year we've generated our annual UDS report using NextGen. Prior to the NextGen system, generating this report required multiple meetings—which took many hours—to determine if our numbers were correct. Now, to review and approve our numbers, we hold one meeting that lasts about an hour and a half."

Increased funding opportunities

Better reporting means improved funding opportunities. "NextGen software's reporting capabilities enabled us to gather information about our patients—segmented by zip code—in order to aid in the application for a March of Dimes grant. In the future, NextGen's reporting tool will certainly continue to aid in these types of initiatives," says Goforth.

Decreased costs

Since implementing its NextGen solution, SCH reduced the medical record department by two full time employees, greatly reduced the costs involved with maintaining paper charts, and eliminated transcription costs.

Reduced risk

NextGen software's templates help make patient interaction more accurate at SCH. Dr. Jones explains, "Recently, there was a recall on a heart medication taken by many of our patients. We quickly pulled a report detailing all SCH patients on that medication and immediately contacted them about the recall. Having this capability significantly improves our ability to reduce—and manage—risk."

By centralizing patient charts in one database, multiple SCH users can simultaneously document and save data in a patient's chart—thus alleviating potential risk and ensuring improved continuity of care.

Finally, advanced security controls such as password requirements, user roles, and full audit trails ensure that privileged information is protected and kept confidential.

An ongoing partnership built on trust and support

SCH appreciates the personalized attention it receives from NextGen Healthcare. "We work very closely with NextGen Healthcare's CHC department. When we need to address a particular issue, we're pleased that they are generally resolved within 24 hours," concludes Goforth.


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For full information about the features and functions of NextGen Healthcare's products and services, please contact us at www.nextgen.com/contact.

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