

Case Study >>>>

Clinical content enables specialty practice to eliminate time-consuming customization

A desire to give staff members fingertip access to vital information—both clinical and administrative—was the driving force behind Springfield Cardiology's decision to implement electronic health record and practice management systems. At the same time, practice leadership wanted to ensure the selected systems genuinely supported physicians and staff by making their jobs significantly easier.

After an exhaustive search, Springfield Cardiology determined the NextGen Enterprise Practice Management (EPM) and NextGen Electronic Health Records (EHR) systems were best suited for the challenge. NextGen EHR software was delivered with easy-to-use sets of existing clinical content—templates, documents, alerts and rules—that the practice's physicians could start using immediately, with no time or expense wasted on customization. Likewise, NextGen EPM software automated the entire continuum of practice management functions and ensured that all claims were processed correctly to minimize rejections and maximize reimbursement.



Overview

PRACTICE

Springfield Cardiology

PRACTICE PROFILE

Cardiology practice located in Springfield, Ohio.

BUSINESS PROBLEM

Sought an integrated practice management/billing system that would help improve efficiency and cash flow, and an electronic health records system that would make comprehensive clinical data immediately accessible to all physicians.

SOLUTION

Implemented NextGen® EHR and NextGen® EPM software.

PRODUCT DISTINCTIONS

- Specialty-specific input templates
- Practice-ready EHR for rapid implementation
- Comprehensive revenue cycle management functionality
- Customized training and implementation plan
- Electronic "tasking" functions

BENEFITS

- Easy transition from paper to electronic processes
- Enhanced patient care and practice productivity
- Comprehensive charge capture and cost recovery
- Decreased A/R days
- Improved communication and accountability

Search for the right solution

Springfield Cardiology had relied upon an archaic billing process and paper charts for about a year after opening in 2002. Although its billing company had provided scheduling and billing software, the practice nevertheless found itself relying on paper-based encounter forms—circling diagnosis and procedure codes to be processed by the vendor at a later date. Similarly, the office was choked with paper charts that were often left unfiled and, therefore, unavailable to physicians when needed.

In order to improve operational efficiency and ensure that physicians delivered optimal care, the practice decided it was time to adopt advanced health information technology. With both an MBA and an MD behind his name, practice administrator Azim Shaikh found himself uniquely qualified to direct Springfield Cardiology's search for technology.

Dr. Shaikh's first stop was the Internet, where he viewed between 20 and 30 online demos to conduct his initial assessment of available systems. After narrowing the field to five candidates, Dr. Shaikh evaluated specific features and benefits for each system, and conferred with other cardiology practices that had adopted similar technology.

NextGen Healthcare was one of two finalists, and was ultimately selected for two reasons:

- NextGen EHR software featured a cardiology KBM—a comprehensive set of input templates, forms, and menus designed specifically for cardiology. This would facilitate fast and easy implementation of the system, eliminating expensive customization. In addition, because the KBM was developed with practicing cardiologists, workflow accurately reflected the progression commonly used by Springfield Cardiology physicians during patient encounters. During the search process, Dr. Shaikh discovered that most of other systems were organized in a way that “didn't make sense for a cardiologist.”
- NextGen Healthcare was willing to customize implementation of the systems to meet the practice's needs. Although committed to adopting both the NextGen EHR and NextGen EPM systems, Springfield Cardiology did not want to overwhelm staff or disrupt clinical operations. It worked with NextGen Healthcare to roll out the NextGen EPM software first, and used it for several months to ensure staff members were comfortable. Subsequently, it implemented NextGen EHR software, conducting comprehensive training and gradually introducing staff to various system features.

“NextGen systems are extremely easy to implement, and NextGen EHR software features templates that our physicians could begin to use immediately. Minimal time was spent customizing the system for our specialty area.”

Azim Shaikh, MD, MBA
Practice Administrator



Transition is smooth and stress-free

Springfield Cardiology took a number of steps to ensure the transition from paper-based to electronic processes went as smoothly as possible. To start, Dr. Shaikh worked closely with the physicians to gain full support for the conversion—particularly with those who had less familiarity with computers. When other staff witnessed the physicians' commitment, their resistance to change diminished.

Secondly, the practice took full advantage of NextGen Healthcare's flexible training options, offering staff multi-step instruction so that implementation was relatively pain-free. Dr. Shaikh notes the NextGen Healthcare trainers were extremely knowledgeable—those assisting with the NextGen EPM software implementation, for instance, were certified medical billers themselves.

Thirdly, Springfield Cardiology did as much "advance work" as possible. The practice invested in two scanners, using NextGen's Image Control System (ICS) to import the documents and attach them to each patient's electronic record. To stay ahead of the data-entry curve, Springfield continues to collect information from patients prior to office visits. Noting that "chart prep" saves patients time, Dr. Shaikh says staff members input clinical information from the scanned documents before scheduled appointments.

Practice reports improved productivity, profitability, and patient care

Springfield Cardiology has realized a wide range of benefits since implementing the NextGen systems. Cash flow has improved, collections have increased and days in A/R have dropped from 38 to 28. Springfield Cardiology is also operating at peak efficiency. Because all records are electronic, physicians have immediate access to any clinical information they need, and can sign off on lab or test results quickly and easily. In addition, the practice is enjoying greatly enhanced administrative efficiency.

The NextGen system features workflow management functions, in which tasks are automatically assigned to staff members through the system. Since all assignments are monitored through completion, staff members are held accountable for their tasks. For instance, claims that are rejected may automatically be sent to a specific staff member for follow-up.



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