

# Agility EHR® helps Valley Immediate Care realize \$16 per patient revenue increase – in the first four months of use.

Government reimbursements are not the only incentives that send a medical practice on a search for an electronic medical record (EMR). Lost revenue from under-coding, time wasted searching for misplaced charts, legibility complaints from pharmacists and specialists, and the high costs of transcription and paper chart storage rank among the top operational issues tackled by certain EMRs. In addition to these challenges, as an urgent care's occupational health practice grows – or an occupational health provider's urgent care practice grows -- working around a software system not designed to address issues in both these specialties severely diminishes staff productivity and results in numerous errors and re-work.

## THE NEED

Valley Immediate Care (VIC), an Urgent Care and Occupational Medicine provider with four clinic locations in Grants Pass and Medford, Oregon, faced these issues when they began a search for an integrated EMR and practice management system in 2008. Physician coding training was an especially big challenge for VIC. Brent Kell, Executive Director, reported that under-coding resulted in substantial lost revenue. "Even when the coding was correct, insufficient charting resulted in many claims being down-coded. In addition, with the growth of our occupational health program, the number of employer protocols became too great to effectively manage with MS Word."

## SOFTWARE CRITERIA

In mid-2008, Valley Immediate Care began a two-year search for the right EMR software. To guide the search, Kell defined a list of criteria. First, he looked for software that was CCHIT certified, with a vendor commitment to achieve ARRA certification. "Beyond the promise of ARRA reimbursements, I felt that certification would guarantee interoperability with other systems, which was important to us." Kell also looked for a system with a quick, efficient and flexible provider interface, and identified requirements important to supporting the occupational health side of the practice, such as a good scheduling system and highly flexible employer billing. He also wanted an Employer Portal to enable employers to securely view HIPAA-compliant information about employee visits, especially workers' compensation claims, without having to call the clinic. Easy navigation was a key element to gaining provider buy-in. To these ends, he enlisted the input of VIC's Medical Director in the search process.

An internet search led Brent to Net Health, and specifically to the Agility software – a product that is both CCHIT 2011 and ARRA certified and includes an integrated EMR and practice management software solution specifically designed to meet the needs of both occupational health and urgent care providers.

## SITE VISIT

Shortly after finding the Agility software, Kell attended an urgent care industry conference and had the opportunity to talk directly with an enthusiastic Agility client. But what really sealed the deal was a site visit to see Agility in action. "We really felt it was important to see the software in use. No other vendors were able to provide us with that opportunity." Kell and his colleagues liked what they saw. Valley Immediate Care purchased Agility and went live with the software in January 2011. The Agility software helps Valley Immediate Care realize \$16 per patient revenue increase.

## Challenge

Lost revenue from under-coding; time wasted searching for misplaced charts; legibility complaints from pharmacists and specialists; high costs of transcription and paper chart storage; inability to manage employer protocols effectively; Valley Immediate Care (VIC) wanted to solve these problems and more with a new EMR and practice management system.

## Solution

Agility from Net Health was selected after seeing the software in action in a real urgent care clinic. The charting and coding support provided VIC physicians a fast, efficient way to complete their documentation. The employer protocol functions gave the clinic staff a simple, quick way to ensure that employer requirements are met the first time, every time.

## Results

In the first four months of use, VIC realized an average of \$16 increased revenue per visit, simply from the coding and auto-charge capabilities Agility offers. At 55,000 visits per year, the system paid for itself in no time.

## IMPROVEMENTS EACH DAY AFTER GO LIVE

Valley Immediate Care went live with Agility starting on a weekend, then brought one clinic live each following day. They made sure they were heavily staffed throughout that period. "At the end of each day, we would have debriefing sessions and discuss what worked and what didn't. Then we'd spend time fixing what didn't, to prepare for the next day. So each day, it got better and better. There were some long nights that first month, but we had planned for it, so everyone was OK." As for the Net Health staff, Kell was very pleased with the level of support they provided throughout the implementation and go-live. "They had a great sense of when to hold back and let people learn for themselves and when to step in."

## RESULTS

The single biggest impact that Agility has had for Valley Immediate Care is an average increase of \$16 per patient visit, which Kell said came about right out of the chute. "With about 55,000 patient visits this year, that's a very big deal! I no longer worry about the doctors' coding – and they don't either. The E & M coding feedback is there immediately in Agility."

Moving to electronic charts also evened out the workflow among clinics. In the past, being tied to a paper chart meant that all of the referrals, patient call backs and medication requests had to run through the specific clinic at which the chart was located. Now, with electronic charts, that work can be distributed more evenly, to the clinic that is the least busy at any point in time.

On the whole, the physicians are very happy with the software. Kell has been working with some of the physicians on their Favorites lists. "In an hour, I built a favorite medications list for one physician, which then saved him an hour in the first day of use. He was excited! Our pharmacist and specialists are also really happy we've gone to an EMR," said Kell. "The specialist offices that we send notes to have expressed a lot of gratitude that we send complete chart notes, and they're legible. Now they're getting the whole picture, and that's been a big benefit to everyone."

Looking ahead, Agility has created efficiencies that Kell believes will allow VIC to grow without adding staff. The clinic whiteboard has been an especially useful tool. VIC's centralized call center can access the whiteboard, get a real-time picture of what's going on in each clinic, and divert patients to the clinic with the shortest wait time. "We're also getting ready to rollout online check-in, and the whiteboard is going to be a tremendous tool for this purpose," Kell asserted. "As we receive the registration forms, we'll be able to direct patients to the clinic that is the least busy. By using our staff a lot more efficiently and effectively, we can handle a larger patient volume through the whole clinic. And that's the real bottom line," Kell concluded.

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