



e-MDs BOOSTS REVENUES, CUTS COSTS FOR ALASKA PRACTICE

Alyeska Family Medicine

Mario Lanza, MD, knew that he needed an electronic health record when he started a family practice in Anchorage, Alaska, in 2006. Having previously worked for a larger group that used paper charts, he was familiar with the endless rounds of chart pulling, filing, the occasional missing or misplaced record, and the stacks of charts on his desk at the end of the day. He knew that he needed a better way to track the preventive and chronic care needs of his patients. And he was convinced that, sooner or later, the government would require all physicians to use EHRs.

What Dr. Lanza didn't realize, however, was how much a good EHR could improve his quality of care and his practice's bottom line. Two years after implementing his e-MDs EHR - one of two products that have since been endorsed by the Alaska EHR Alliance - Dr. Lanza is saving \$100,000 a year in labor costs alone, and has already recovered in his initial investment.

e-MDs Is The Right Choice

Dr. Lanza selected e-MDs after a six-month search that included demonstrations of four other products. He was impressed by the intuitive way that e-MDs worked, which was similar to the way he practiced. Other EHRs, in contrast, would have made him change how he worked. "I wanted a better tool to do the same job. I didn't want the EHR to change how I did the job."

Dr. Lanza was also looking for an EHR that was integrated with a first-rate practice management (PM) system. His existing PM system was hard to use and had weak reporting capabilities. e-MDs practice management impressed him and his billing staff.

Superb Training, Implementation and Support

Dr. Lanza and three members of his team went to e-MDs' Austin, Texas headquarters for training on the practice management system and EHR. Then they returned to the practice and trained the staff, with assistance from e-MDs' online education modules. The staff caught on quickly.

The practice acquired a server and a network of 18 desktop PCs, as well as computer tablets that the physicians use in the exam rooms. With hardware service provided by a local computer consultant, the practice has had practically no downtime on its EHR.

CLINIC PROFILE

Primary Care Practice in Anchorage, Alaska

2 Physicians

4,500 Patient Visits Per Year

e-MDs PRODUCTS

e-MDs Solution Series (Integrated EHR/PM)

LabCorp Lab Results Interface

PROJECT GOALS

Provide Better Patient Care

Improve Office Efficiency

Achieve Financial Return On Investment

Increase Patient Satisfaction

RESULTS

Improved operational efficiencies resulting in annual labor savings of more than \$100,000

25% reduction in physician documentation time (~2 hours/per provider)

Increased revenue by improved coding accuracy and better charge capture

Recovered initial EHR/ Hardware investment in 2 years from revenue gains and labor savings

Dr. Lanza strongly recommends e-MDs' software support. "The company's technicians are so responsive," he says, "They're like my own employees. We've had them remote in at all hours of the day, even on weekends, to help us fix things. Their support is just over the top."

Making The Transition From Paper To Electronic

To ramp up their productivity quickly, Dr. Lanza had medical assistants enter key data from the practice's paper charts in the system. Afterwards, they scanned in chart notes, lab results and other documents as patients came in for visits. The advance work helped—within 60 days of go-live, the providers were at full productivity.

Increased Efficiency Saves Time and Money

The e-MDs EHR has increased the office's efficiency. When prescription refill requests are called in from pharmacies, charts no longer have to be pulled and filed; Dr. Lanza looks at the electronic record and clicks on 'refill', and it goes online to the correct pharmacy. Some pharmacies send their requests on-line and go directly to the doctor's electronic in-box within e-MDs, eliminating the need for staff time to process the request. Dr. Lanza figures he's saving at least \$6,000/year on reduced chart handling for refills alone.

A similar savings occurs for lab results. Using e-MDs interface with LabCorp, (which does the majority of Alyeska's lab tests) the results automatically populate the EHR, eliminating the time consuming task of filing or scanning lab reports.

Dr. Lanza also saves time on documentation. "One day last week, I had 27 progress notes that I finished off in less than an hour. That normally would have taken me 4 or 5 hours to do if I didn't have an electronic record. And there have been days where I saw patients and walked out of the last patient's room and had one note left to finish for the whole day."

On average, Dr. Lanza adds, he saves two hours per day on recording his notes—a 25% savings in time. In addition he notes the lifestyle benefits of being able to finish up his work at home in the evening, using remote access to the system. Easy remote access also means he can keep up when he's on vacation, instead of returning to a stack of paper charts and message slips.

Return on Investment: Dr. Lanza Counts The Ways

Alyeska Family Medicine has realized a rapid return on their EHR investment. The EHR has supported the practice's growing patient volume since providers can see more patients. Additionally, e-MDs health maintenance prompts have increased the number of patients returning for preventive care. e-MDs coding assistant has helped the practice increase coding accuracy, and the EHR's order entry tool has improved charge capture. Dr. Lanza estimates that for like patients, the EHR has increased his level of charges about 15-20 percent. And more of his claims go through on the first pass, because they're correctly coded.

The automation features of the e-MDs billing system allowed him to trim his billing staff, saving about \$55,000 a year. In addition, the elimination of paper charts and the overall efficiency of the system made it possible reduce his medical

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-Dr. Mario Lanza

assistant staff by an FTE (full time equivalent), resulting in a labor savings of roughly \$50,000. Currently, the practice employs three FTE staff members per physician, compared with the MGMA national average of 4.5 FTEs for Family Practice.

Dr. Lanza has recovered his initial EHR software and hardware investment and is now in the black, even after including his annual costs for software and hardware support. And the savings will continue in the future, he notes. "The more you use the features of this product, the more and more you will save."

Contact e-MDs at 1.888.344.9836 or alaska@e-mds.com



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