

# Sage Intergy EHR | Success Story

## Diabetes & Endocrine Associates of the Treasure Coast

The Second Time's the Charm with Sage Intergy EHR

### ● CHALLENGE

Create a paperless facility emphasizing accuracy and reliability of documentation. System flexibility and ease of use are major requirements.

### ● SOLUTION

A sudden failure of the practice's old system required a rapid switch to Sage Intergy. Implementation began with creating templates, scanning charts and entering histories. Because of the system's flexibility, ongoing fine-tuning has been easily accomplished.

### ● RESULTS

Eliminated \$15,000-\$30,000 in transcription costs per physician per year; Notes are available immediately instead of taking up to 10 days; Saving almost \$150 a month in records storage; Reduced staff by two FTEs; Responding to patient inquiries takes seconds instead of hours; Physicians are done by closing most days.

### SPECIALTY

Diabetes, Endocrinology

### LOCATION

Florida

### NUMBER OF LOCATIONS

One

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

Three Physicians, 15 Staff

### SOLUTIONS USED

Sage Intergy

Sage Intergy EHR

### Integrated Practice and Clinical Management Solutions

When Denise Tonner, MD, FACE and her partners left a multi-specialty group to start their own practice in 2001, they knew they wanted to do things differently. They envisioned Diabetes and Endocrine Associates of the Treasure Coast (DEA) as a paperless facility, where they could "set the standard for reliable and accurate office and financial documentation and improve the quality of life for patients with diabetes."

The old practice used paper records and traditional transcription. The charts were housed in a central location and moved around with only one chart per patient for use by 40 providers. It took 2-10 days to turn around dictated notes at an annual cost of \$15,000 - \$30,000 per physician.

Today, DEA is using integrated practice and clinical management solutions from Sage to streamline their practice, and they are well on their way to being almost entirely paperless. Most importantly, Sage Intergy EHR is enabling the physicians to document visits at the point of care and complete follow up such as labs and prescriptions electronically, resulting in better care and the ability to head home at five.

### Searching for the Right Solution

Finding the right solutions wasn't as easy as Dr. Tonner had hoped. Initially, the practice implemented a small, practice management and electronic medical records (EMR) system. Their goal was to have a solution that offered a Windows®-based EMR that was integrated with practice management and billing and had an encounter note that looked like a dictated note. The physicians and many of the staff were computer novices so there were also concerns about cost and ease of use.

The system they chose was not what they hoped it would be. "The EMR didn't have the flexibility we had anticipated, interfaces were a problem, there were hardware issues and the billing piece was not working for us," explains Dr. Tonner. "It wasn't long before we knew it was time to switch gears and try something else."

### A Quick Switch to the Sage Intergy Suite

A new practice manager had just stepped in, and together, she and the physicians began looking at the options. In the end, they chose Sage Intergy. An implementation plan was set up to get them up and running, but that fell apart when the old system crashed and they had to switch to Sage Intergy virtually overnight. The prospect was scary, but the transition went well. "We had to hurry to get the templates done and get the rest of the charts scanned and histories entered, but we managed to do it," recalls Dr. Tonner. "Since then we have gone back and retooled some things because we have learned more about how the system works and what our needs are. That is one of the nice things about this system, the flexibility and ease of use."

## Improving Documentation and Coding, Eliminating Transcriptions and Easily Accessing Patient Records From Home

While the practice continues to learn how to use their systems more effectively, they have already seen many benefits. From the elimination of transcription to easy access to patient records from home to improved job satisfaction, things just keep getting better. “It used to be that our issues were with the software itself,” Dr. Tonner says. “Now our biggest issues are things like whether or not to put in a T1 line and implementing a fax manager to eliminate the last paper we have in the office.”

“Eliminating external storage for charts has saved us almost \$150 a month and the reduction in internal storage has created more work space for staff,” says Denise Sousa, the new practice manager for DEA. “We also used to have an extra billing person and another receptionist up front and those positions have been eliminated.” In addition, as the physicians have become more adept at using the encounter note tools, they have been able to improve documentation and coding. Dr. Tonner estimates that today about 90% of their notes come from using templates and favorites to enter information and only 10% is entered as free text. As a result, the encounter is documented much faster and most days she is out of the office by five and on her way home.

## Growing Their Business More Effectively

Recently, Sage Intergy helped DEA to move into their new location and expand their business. The new office is in a 9,000 square foot space in a heavily populated area. Prior to the move, in a day, the practice saw about 100 patients and the lab saw 40-50 patients. They will now be able to potentially add another physician and see more patients in the lab. There was no need for storage in the new office, which enabled them to have more flexibility in choosing a space and made the move itself easier.

There is no doubt in Dr. Tonner and Denise Sousa’s minds that Sage Intergy has improved the overall management of the office and care of the patients and is allowing them to grow their business more effectively. According to Dr. Tonner one of the reasons is because, “There are a lot of checks and balances in the system so that things don’t get missed.” She also believes that, “tasks get done faster and more efficiently. For example, we can respond to patient inquiries in seconds and it used to take as much as eight hours with paper charts.”

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– Denise Sousa  
Diabetes & Endocrine Associates of the  
Treasure Coast

## Patients and Staff Noticed the Difference

Since the transition, everyone is happier. “I was surprised by the fact that even the patients noticed the difference,” says Sousa. “And, the staff response has been really positive especially because Sage provides such a good resource for support.” Dr. Tonner says that the nurses have commented on the fact that they would never want to go back to paper-based charts for triage because the computerized access to patient charts allows them to respond immediately to patient needs.

## Continually Learning and Growing with Sage Intergy

“We are always learning and growing with Sage Intergy,” says Dr. Tonner. “We don’t even get every upgrade because the system is so great. We just take the ones that have something that will make a real difference for us. The rest of the time we are just learning new ways to use what we have. The system’s flexibility allows it to fit everyone’s workflow. So, you will see someone doing something a different way and you keep learning new tricks all the time. We just keep fine-tuning and it keeps getting better and better. Now I think of something Isaac Asimov said and believe it’s true, ‘I do not fear computers, I fear the lack of them.’”