

Sage Intergy EHR | Success Story

Florida Medical Clinic

Multi-Specialty Practice Cut Costs with Sage Intergy

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● CHALLENGE

Patients visiting multiple specialists at different clinic locations resulted in duplicate records, making it a challenge to effectively coordinate patient care across the business.

● SOLUTION

The practice selected the Sage Intergy integrated suite of clinical and financial solutions, including practice management, electronic health records (EHR), reporting / analytics, and the practice portal.

● RESULTS

Utilizing an EHR reduced annual transcription costs by nearly \$1 million, and the practice management solution has decreased the practice's accounts receivable to only 27 days – a record low.

SPECIALTY

Multi-Specialty Clinics

LOCATION

Florida

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS

Sixteen

NUMBER OF STAFF & PATIENT VISITS

100+ Clinicians, 35+ ARNPs and PAs
3,000+ patients per day

SOLUTIONS USED

Sage Intergy / Sage Intergy EHR
Sage Intergy RIS / Sage Intergy PACS
Sage Intergy Practice Portal
Sage Practice Analytics

Coordinating Care Across a Multi-specialty Organization

Multi-specialty clinics have unique challenges. Patients benefit from easy access to specialists who have relationships with their primary care physicians, but tracking encounters with various specialists at multiple locations can lead to an information management challenge.

Keeping track of paper-based patient records was a formidable challenge for Florida Medical Clinic in Zephyrhills, Florida. With more than 100 clinicians at six clinics providing care for 3,000 patients per day, there was a need for an efficient patient record management system. "A patient in our practice could easily have had ten different charts at ten different locations, and it made it very difficult for our providers to be able to manage the patient from all clinical perspectives," said Joe Delatorre, CEO of the Florida Medical Clinic.

For more than a decade, Florida Medical Clinic had used the Sage Medical Manager practice management system to standardize processes and increase the efficiency of its financial operations. When the practice's leadership decided it was time to invest in an electronic health record (EHR) solution that could connect the clinics, enable them to securely share patient information, and better coordinate care, Florida Medical Clinic immediately turned to Sage for a solution.

"We had been a Medical Manager facility for many, many years, and when we looked to move to a different platform and to expand our capabilities, we really didn't look around too much. We looked to the folks that we had a good relationship with and looked very deeply into their particular product," said Emilio Dominquez, M.D., an infectious disease specialist at Florida Medical Clinic.

Ultimately, they decided to purchase Sage Intergy EHR and upgrade from Sage Medical Manager to Sage Intergy to take advantage of the integration. They also employed Sage Practice Analytics and the Sage Intergy Practice Portal for advanced business intelligence and enhanced patient communications .

"We liked the seamlessness of the integration between the practice management product and the electronic health record," Dominquez said. "A lot of the folks here at the clinic were often doing two different jobs. They were doing both the clinical work on one side as well as the practice management work on the other side. We wanted a solution where they would easily be able to shift back and forth without a problem."

Realizing the Benefits of Sage Intergy EHR

Sage committed 40 people to work with the practice during the planning and implementation processes, and assisted with user training. "In our implementation I had doctors that didn't even know how to use a mouse," Delatorre said. "Typing was another issue we identified that a lot of physicians just never developed. But the system is dynamic enough to allow you to – if you're a good typist – you can take advantage of it, and if you're not, you can adapt in other ways."

Soon after file conversion and go live, users began realizing numerous benefits:

- No more lost charts to locate.
- Multiple users and clinics could view patient records simultaneously including scanned images of any necessary paper-based information.
- Lab results were automatically uploaded electronically to the correct patient record, eliminating faxed results and expediting review / follow-up processes.
- The EHR's tasking capabilities enabled users to assign tasks electronically – no more passing paper notes – and enabled physicians to easily communicate with staffers throughout the normal course of their day rather than waiting to return messages at the end of a long workday.
- Physicians quickly took advantage of electronic prescribing and as a result, patients appreciated the ability to handle their refill requests more efficiently.

- Clinical documentation and coding improved with the use of Encounter Note within the EHR.

“Most of our providers here at Florida Medical Clinic are using the Encounter Note,” Dominquez said. “The beauty about the product is that it can be utilized in a template format, or it can be utilized with a tremendous amount of free text placed in it. “One of the main things is being able to collect data and pre-populate data on that encounter note based on a lot of the work that your staff has already done with the patient prior to you coming into the room to see them,” Dominquez added.

Plus, providers love the fact that they have access to everybody's notes. “It gives them clear insight as to what's going on with the patient, what's been done to the patient, what needs to be done with the patient, and it's all laid out in a very organized fashion so the provider can really take advantage of that,” Dominquez said.

Realizing the Benefits of the Practice Portal

Improved information access is also being extended to patients via the Sage Intergy Practice Portal. “There's a tremendous comfort nowadays with Internet-based communication. So the ability of a patient to be able to request a refill, or to request an appointment at the practice all via a portal system we find to be absolutely vital. Even reviewing their laboratories and being able to get their own personal health history from the portal, those are the kind of things that the consumer – the patient – is demanding, and we want to be able to provide that for them,” Dominquez said.

Realizing the Benefits of Integrated Practice Management

Other benefits that the practice realized were the result of the Sage Intergy practice management system. “Our claims are definitely more accurate and complete, particularly because of the ability to utilize the claims scrubbing product that Sage offers. That has allowed us to ensure that the claims go out in a much cleaner fashion than they did previously,” said Chris Alvarez, director of finance for Florida Medical Clinic. “In addition, because a lot of the coding now occurs at the front end of the process, we've been able to implement more of a review than prior processes probably would have allowed.”

Florida Medical Clinic is also using Sage Practice Analytics to benchmark the practice against peers and specialties. “We pull a lot of key indicators related to accounts receivable days as well as patient balances, which are becoming more and more of a part of the collection cycle, to understand how our collections on patient balances compare to industry norms,” Alvarez said. “We also look at individual physician performance metrics versus the marketplace and, of course, against our own expectations and prior year data.”

The suite of Sage solutions is driving a positive return on the practice's investment in multiple ways. For example:

- The elimination of paper-based patient records is allowing the practice to reclaim valuable office space for other uses.

- Access to electronic information increased staff efficiency.
- Duplicate tests and procedures have been reduced since clinicians can quickly determine what has been previously ordered or performed.
- Accounts receivable has decreased to an average of 27 days – *a figure almost unheard of in such a large practice* - thanks to electronic claim scrubbing and remittance.

Creating a Return on Investment

“Clearly, we are more efficient using the Intergy EHR system than we were before. Our business in the last two and a half years has probably grown anywhere from 30 to 40 percent,” Delatorre said.

“I think when you evaluate electronic health records, you try to figure how you create a return on investment. For Florida Medical Clinic it came really in maybe two or three major categories. The first one was the electronic eligibility verification process. Having the ability to monitor, check and evaluate insurances before the patient gets there on an automated basis when you're seeing 3,000 patients a day is critical,” Delatorre said.

“The second issue for us was the ability to have multiple fee schedules by payer, by plan. When you're dealing with a multi-specialty group, you need to have the ability for your posters and your collectors to know exactly what you're supposed to get paid on for any single visit. The ability to load fee schedules in that manner really gave us a strategic advantage in being able to make sure that we were getting paid according to our contracts.

“And, the third issue for us is transcription services. Prior to the solutions, Florida Medical Clinic spent approximately \$1.8 million a year in transcription costs. We employed over 45 full-time transcriptions. Today, two and a half years later, I'm down to 18 transcriptionists, and my costs are well below a million dollars. So those three things made a huge difference for us in terms of the financial aspects of Sage Intergy EHR.”

Partnering for Success

For Florida Medical Clinic, it's the people that make the difference. “The process of evaluating an electronic health record for any organization is a very large decision. Find the product that best suits your needs, and make sure it's within your cost expectations,” Delatorre said. “Finally, pick people you want to work with because there's going to be issues, and you want to make sure you've got good relationships. Ask customers and clients about their relationships with their vendors and make sure that you've got who you're looking for. We found it in Sage, and it has been a long-standing relationship we've had now for well over 15 years.”

According to Delatorre, Florida Medical Clinic has successfully worked with Sage to resolve any issues that it has encountered. “With any system, you're going to have issues, and the question is: ‘are the people going to be there when you need them when you have an issue?’ The answer to that is: ‘with Sage, absolutely.’”