

Sage Intergy | Success Story

Metroplex Pain Management

Managing Complex, Subjective Care with Sage Intergy and Sage Intergy EHR

● CHALLENGE

Provide fact-based, responsive, accountable and principled care for patients with multiple conditions and medications delivered by a team of specialists.

● SOLUTION

Tracking and managing patient information and prescriptions with Sage Intergy EHR gives providers ready access to vital and up-to-date health records.

● RESULTS

Reduced outside transcription costs by 86% while cutting physician overtime and downsizing staff by 10% through attrition.

SPECIALTY

Pain Management

LOCATION

Texas

NUMBER OF USERS

Seven Providers, 35 Staff

SOLUTIONS USED

Sage Intergy

Sage Intergy EHR

Complex Diagnoses and Treatments Presents a Workflow Challenge

For many medical practices, patient encounters are cut and dry with clear diagnoses and treatments delivered by a single provider. For pain management practices like Metroplex Pain Management in Dallas-Ft. Worth, this is not the case. The 2000 encounters generated in their two clinics each month are far more complicated. They have patients with multiple conditions and medications—all being referred by other providers—who need pain management care that is delivered by a team of specialists working together to offer a combination of strategies.

“When we started looking for a new practice management system, being able to see the patient’s entire story in one place and having supporting documentation for care were critical components,” explains practice administrator Elizabeth Beard. “We needed everyone from the clinical staff to the billing staff to have immediate access to current information and be able to justify our treatment to payers because pain can be somewhat subjective.” Another consideration was streamlining provider workflow to improve quality of life and reduce stress for providers who were working long hours with very high needs patients.

Streamlining Access to Patient Information

Implementing Sage Intergy and Sage Intergy EHR enabled the practice to achieve these goals and more effectively meet their mission to provide fact-based, responsive, accountable and principled care. Metroplex has been implementing the Sage Intergy solutions in phases since late 2002 to ensure success with each piece before learning a new system. “We knew that this was a long-term investment that would take time and commitment to get in place,” recalls Beard. “But we also knew that we were getting the Cadillac of practice management systems from a company that’s reliable and knowledgeable and will be around to build and improve the software as the industry changes.”

Eliminating the Problems of Lost and Misplaced Charts

After successful deployment of the practice management system, Metroplex began adding electronic health record (EHR) solutions in 2004, starting with document and image management and electronic charting. These systems allowed them to scan existing patient charts and create new charts electronically to eliminate paper-based charting. Next, they began using task management and electronic prescribing, a key piece of their practice. And finally, they initiated electronic encounter documentation to more effectively document complex, subjective care.

“Pain management is like the caboose of the medical train, the end of the line for many patients,” says Beard. “Once a patient comes to us, they often have a lot of medical history that our providers need to review. The ability to scan and organize all that data into an electronic chart makes the process of preparing for a new patient encounter much easier.” It also means that anyone in the practice can access the information at anytime, which has eliminated a major problem of lost and misplaced charts and the need for a full time courier between sites. That person has been reallocated to other duties, and Beard believes that soon they will reduce staff by about one half of a full-time employee.



Effectively Collect, Track and Access Information

Both providers and staff are very happy with the ability to more easily access patient information and the ability to more effectively collect information. According to Beard, “Everyone is saving time, and communication throughout the business is much better as well. Even early on, before the system was fully installed, physicians and staff could see the time savings and benefits and there were no complaints about learning a new system.” Because of the subjective nature of the specialty, this ability to track and access information and communicate easily with other providers is helpful in the documentation process, which in turn is helpful in the billing process.

Another area where tracking is essential is in management of patient prescriptions. “We fill over 55,000 prescriptions a year and 12,000 of those are Classification II narcotics,” Beard explains. “The electronic prescription system enables us to track prescriptions, view lapse dates and make sure that medications are not refilled sooner than needed.” In her opinion, this system is the single greatest feature of Sage Intergy. Texas law requires that all Classification II scripts be handwritten and signed. To make sure that these prescriptions are in the patient record, they are both scanned and entered into the system. It may be tedious, but Beard believes that they are able to meet the legal requirements and carefully track patient medications to help ensure patient safety and prevent abuse. “This system protects us, the referring providers, and the patients,” she says. “We know immediately what medications patients are taking, when the prescription was written and by whom. If there was nothing else, having that information readily available is wonderful.”

Complete and Accurate Documentation Improves Claims

The issue of subjectivity in pain management keeps coming up, and nowhere is it more noticeable than in the encounter documentation. “You have to be very careful when documenting care at a practice like this,” says Beard. “If you aren’t, you risk having your claims rejected for lack of medical necessity.” An electronic solution that enables them to create forms and favorites, add notes and use tags to add some dictation to document encounters was a much better choice than straight dictation. According to Beard, “The .wav files would be too big with the length and complexity of our encounters so it had to be electronic documentation.” She says that the physicians are saving a lot of time and are very happy with the system, and everyone feels that encounters are being captured more completely. Not only are the providers saving time and getting home earlier but the practice has reduced staff size by 10% through attrition as a result of using the system.

Working Less Overtime for an Improved Quality of Life

According to Elizabeth Beard, Metroplex Pain Management is a far less chaotic and hectic workplace now. People are working less overtime and there’s been lower staff turnover—facts she attributes in part to the implementation of Sage Intergy. For her, and the rest of the practice, saving time and being more efficient are more important than saving money. “We have a high-needs population with very high expectations and caring for them can be both psychologically and physically draining,” she says. “Our ability to respond to their needs is much better now. The fact that we are less stressed and that our physicians’ quality of life is improved benefits them as well as us. This is the best system this business has ever had and Sage is the best company with whom we have worked.”

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