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Kunkes Ear, Nose and Throat **Specializes in otolaryngology** **Riverdale, Georgia**

EMR and Starfish, An Unlikely Combination? Not really.

What does an article about the non-stick slime made by starfish have in common with a state-of-the-art cloud EMR software system?

They are both examples of Dr. Jeffrey Kunkes’ penchant for providing patients with superior quality of care.

Dr. Kunkes is an ENT physician, allergist and sleep specialist who practices in Riverdale, Georgia. He recently posted the educational article about starfish to inform patients about marine biologists in Scotland who believe that starfish’s slime may lead to a new treatment for patients who have asthma, arthritis, hay fever and other inflammatory conditions. The piece is just one of many timely and enlightening articles that Dr. Kunkes posts on his website to educate and inform patients.

And the EMR? Dr. Kunkes relies on WRS, a cloud EMR software system that increases efficiency and streamlines his practice. The result: he can concentrate on his patients.

Moving to Atlanta after finishing his ENT training in New York at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Dr. Kunkes has been in practice since 1981, treating infants to seniors. Kunkes Ear, Nose and Throat offers numerous services, encompassing all branches of otolaryngology, including head and neck surgery, ear disorders, nasal and sinus problems, and throat infections.

Dr. Kunkes spent 30 years in the Clayton/Henry/Fayette County area, sometimes serving as the first ENT in these counties. In 2008, he opened his practice in Riverdale to focus on giving more personal, attentive care. Patients can have allergy testing and treatment and can be tested for sleep apnea in Riverdale.



Dr. Kunkes utilizes Southern Regional and its affiliated Spivey Station Surgery Center so that patients will benefit from a familiarity and a shared team approach with anesthesia and the operating room personnel. Dr. Kunkes employs a staff who specializes in taking care of patients and who are familiar with the most recent advances in ear, nose, and throat medicine. They are all residents of the local community and interact with patients during the course of their daily activities.

“Now with e-prescribing, everything is inside the system. After you prescribe it, the system tracks it. You know if someone is overprescribing or abusing the medication or if there is a need for it. You can send the prescription out to any pharmacy. It doesn’t matter if one of our patients is traveling outside the state; we can find the pharmacy very easily and we can send it electronically.”

Cleaning Up

“The office is so much nicer and cleaner without paper charts falling all over the place,” stated Dr. Kunkes, commenting on WRS. He added, “Just the amount of charts we had—and buying folders from Office Depot--keeping everything electronically has been a real godsend.”

Under One Roof

Using separate software modules from different companies can drain a practice’s finances. “Before we were using a different module and we had to hire a billing company. We were spending \$4,000 a month between billing, collections and medical records. When we switched to WRS we paid a flat monthly fee. The former company said we were going to lose collections. We’ve maintained our collection rate, or increased it. We’ve saved \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month. Because everything is under one company we have saved the hidden costs of billing and collecting, going from one screen to another and printing things. We’ve been able to cut our printing and copying costs significantly, so we’ve been very enamored with WRS. Because we are doing everything under one roof with different modules from one company, which is WRS, we are pleased. We have saved a significant amount of money on billing and collection without missing a step,” stated Dr. Kunkes.



Personal Attention

Let's face it. Implementing a new system can cause trepidation. But, when queried what he likes best about WRS, it's apparent that fear never entered into the picture. "I like WRS ease of use and personalized templates. I'm used to typing notes. I'm not really great with templates, but we've done templates and they are all personalized. The WRS team is good so when we started doing template work, it was not a problem getting templates in the system. WRS staff helped us. So basically, it's the best of both worlds. WRS can be personalized. WRS founder is an ENT so WRS has enormous ENT experience. It's a relatively simple system to work. We're having fewer and fewer claims tossed out. The billing is better (than before). It pairs up well with procedures. We're pleased that it's working out fine for us," said Dr. Kunkes.

Small Blips? No Problem

If a problem crops up, a physician needs to be aligned with a company that doesn't walk away after he signs on the dotted line. "WRS was more than willing to go the extra mile with us and help us. We're very appreciative. The personnel has been good backup. They answer our questions very quickly. We've had some small blips. We've been very pleased. The Team answers our questions quickly. WRS Team was on the phone and working with us the moment that we had a blip to make sure the problem was resolved. There's something to be said for that. We're in service industries and the better the service, the better it is for everyone in getting it worked out," said Dr. Kunkes. Armed with a mission to provide the most complete and thorough care to all patients, Dr. Kunkes archives all of the articles that he posts so that his patients can be educated on a wide range of topics. "It is part of our continuing effort to keep our patients educated and informed," he stated

The Future

Will the slime of Starfish ever become a mainstream treatment for diseases? While no one knows for sure, one thing is clear: Dr. Kunkes will continue to post educational updates while he uses a cloud EMR to focus on delivering quality, cost effective and cost sensitive care for patients.