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Kate Barbalich, PA-C
ENT Specialty Care
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PA-C Helps Patients Combat Allergies, ENT Problems with WRS EMR

It's Tuesday at ENT Specialty Care in Goshen, New York. This is allergy day. Throughout the day, Kate Barbalich, PA-C, will see from 50 to 70 allergy patients. Barbalich is unfazed about the work she has ahead of her. What does she owe this show of confidence to?

Fast and Easy EMR

“WRS web-based EMR system allows me to see so many patients because it is so fast and easy. It's easy to record and see what dose or what injection was put in the patient's arm last week. The system allows me to keep a record of every allergy visit so I know how far they've come, what the next course is, what should they get today and what they are going to get next week,” said Barbalich, who started her stint as PA-C at ENT Specialty Care in September 2011.

Pointing out in her testimonial that she first used WRS ENT EMR in the summer when she worked as a Medical Assistant to Dr. Lawrence Gordon at ENT Specialty Care, Barbalich said, “At the beginning I used WRS with Dr. Gordon. I would see the patient with him. I would transcribe into the chart, I would type everything, prescribe the medication and do the coding. That helped me use WRS EMR when I did actually start to see patients on my own. I had background knowledge. I jumped right into it and that's the only thing we use here. We don't have any paper charts.”



Mastering WRS is a Cinch

Learning how to use an EMR can cause a panic outbreak. Not with WRS. Barbalich said learning to use WRS was easy. “I taught myself. I figured it out. I didn’t have any (formal) training. It’s pretty straightforward. Dr. Gordon suggested that I watch some of the training videos. They were informative. The best way to figure out the system is to use it and it flowed very easily as I started seeing patients,” she said.

Templates Help You Breathe Easier

Having an Allergy Template that helps a provider organize and keep track of all of the things that need to be accomplished during a patient’s visit is essential. “WRS Customized Allergy template is really simple. There is an Allergy Panel, which ENT Specialty Care created within WRS via the Allergy Management Module. There is a table with a list of all of the allergens that are common to this area or whatever area you are testing to and the severity of that person’s allergy based on that testing. I enter which allergen bottle has which allergen in it, what dose and in which arm the injection is going in. It’s really simple. The allergens that I test for are specific to the northeast. I do the testing and I enter the results so it shows me how severe their allergy is or if they are even allergic to that specific allergen. Then I enter the allergy serum created for the patient, how much of that dose they are getting and in which arm it is going in.”

Accessibility is Awesome

What does Barbalich do when a patient calls and she’s not in the office to access their records? “Sometimes established patients will call our lines and it can go to our cell phones. So, when I’m not in the office I can access their chart at home. If someone is calling and they are saying they are so and so, you plug their name in the system and you can see when they were treated, how they were treated, if they have any allergies to medication and based on their complaint what you would need to do over the phone, or have them come in or prescribe medication right away. From home, I can send a prescription for a medication to the pharmacy. That’s really convenient.”

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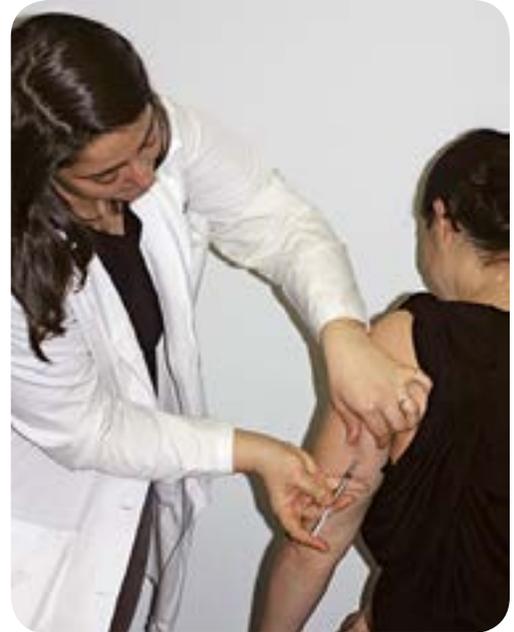
Way to Go

With WRS e-prescribing capability, Barbalich doesn't have to give patients a paper script that they have to drop off at the pharmacy and wait in line for. "We are able to send the Rx electronically and the pharmacist can fill it while the patient is driving over to the pharmacy or if they have to go to work, they can pick it up at the end of the day. That is a huge benefit of e-prescribing. The patient doesn't have any work to do. They just have to show up at the pharmacy. When you send the Rx electronically a window pops up on WRS system that says it was sent successfully and you can also check for that in the system."

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Have You Had Your Test?

When Barbalich isn't tending to allergy patients on Tuesdays, you'll find her serving 10 to 20 ENT patients a day. What helps her get through those hectic days? "We use the patient portal and recall reminders more frequently with ENT patients because they are seen on an as per doctor basis. ENT patients really use the patient portal. Any of the providers will order a test. For example, let's say it's a blood test. That goes into the Order Tracking System and once that test is performed it will stay in the Order Tracking Queue until the patient gets it done. If the patient doesn't get it done within a certain amount of time, the patient will get a reminder. If the patient does get the test performed, it will go from 'pending,' to 'completed.' At that time, it's my responsibility to look over the test, to see the results and to decide what the further action is. Then I put it into the 'further action' queue and I add a little note to it saying 'patient needs follow up with Dr. Gordon,' or 'patient needs to call the office.' Then my front desk will contact the patient."



When our patients get tests performed that's how we log that. The Order Tracking Queue is really helpful. Every test that's ordered is in there until it gets moved, which means until the patient gets it done. So I can see from whatever date, which tests have not been performed. It is important that the tests be performed and you should remind the patient. That's really beneficial to know that we are keeping up on ordered tests and making sure that the patients get the tests done. Once the tests are done, we're notified and we let the patient know that we do have the results, and yes, you should come in. All lab, radiology and pathology reports can be reviewed by the providers and the results and comments can be sent to patients via WRS Patient Portal. It's complete follow up care."

Keeping Abreast of Patients' Medications

Managing patients' medications is particularly crucial for a specialty practice because patients may be taking medications that have been prescribed by other physicians. "For any patient who comes in, we can see the medications that they are currently on, whether it's been prescribed by our practice, or their primary care provider or another specialist and we can update any medication changes if necessary. It also shows us patients' drug allergies and the type of reaction they have to it. Patients' medications change and since we don't prescribe their regular medications, such as high blood pressure or diabetic medications, it's important to keep that information updated. We don't know when there are changes unless we ask the patient. In addition, if we prescribe an antibiotic or other type of medication, the system will show you any drug interactions that they have with any current medications that they take," said Barbalich in her testimonial.

Taking Good Notes

So, what does Barbalich think about WRS Notes? "WRS Notes look clean. I've seen other notes and I don't like them or they look jumbled. WRS Notes show the patient's name and all of their information on top," said Barbalich.

"I don't have a fear of WRS crashing and having everything completely lost. I can get WRS on my smartphone anytime."

Storm Proof

With recent storms hitting the northeast more frequently these days, we wondered if Barbalich had any fears about not being able to access WRS. “We’ve had a couple of issues, like a storm, where there’s no Internet. That’s not the system crashing. It’s just that there’s no power or cable. I don’t have a fear of WRS crashing and of having everything completely lost. I can get WRS on my smartphone anytime.”

Paper is a Thing of the Past

Looking back on her experience at various clinical rotations that prepared her well for her role today, Barbalich recalled that she didn’t think too much about EMRs. What does she think now that she’s a PA-C practicing at ENT Specialty Care? “When I went to school it was based on where you did your rotation. If a place was using an EMR you could use it, but if they were using paper charts you would use the paper charts. You were only at a place for six weeks so you didn’t really get very get used to it. I knew WRS a little bit, so it wasn’t difficult for me to start. I felt indifferent about using an EMR. Now that I use the ENT EMR it is so much easier. It’s definitely simple, easy to use and easy to track the patient’s history and further treatment. There’s no paper; paper can really be crazy. Now, that I’m using WRS, I think that it is great.”