

## Integrated EMR and Revenue Cycle Management: Efficiency in Cash Flow and Workflow



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### Syracuse ENT

#### ENT Practice with Audiology Department Syracuse, NY

It's Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. at Syracuse ENT, a 50-year-old Syracuse, New York based ENT practice that specializes in general ENT, tonsils, adenoids, sinuses, allergies and audiology.

Staffed by two physicians and an R.N., the practice sees about 60 patients per day. Colleen Postma, a certified professional coder and Syracuse ENT's practice manager, begins her day like anyone in her profession whose job it is to enhance billing and revenue management and to ensure a smooth workflow. But instead of feeling overwhelmed by the tasks that she has to accomplish in a rapidly changing healthcare environment, she embraces them, thanks to Waiting Room Solutions cloud EMR.



### Selection of Correct Software Tool

Following a visit to Waiting Room Solutions headquarters in Goshen, NY, Postma and the two physicians had no qualms about enlisting Waiting Room Solutions as the ultimate solution for their practice's needs. “We saw the whole thing. We liked it because it was web based and we didn't need to have our own server. We were using MEDENT for billing. Back then, with MEDENT and some other companies you had to have a server and you could only do things in the office. With Waiting Room Solutions, the doctors are able to do things from home. It has definite and nice little perks going on,” said Postma.

### Cost Considerations

Noting that Syracuse ENT went live with Waiting Room Solutions in 2007, Postma said, “When we selected Waiting Room Solutions we integrated everything. It was practical and it was not that expensive. It served the purpose of what we needed. We were looking to get into EMR and we decided that Waiting Room Solutions was a little bit more feasible for our practice to do that.”

## RCM Connectivity and Integration

Crediting WRS integration with clearinghouses such as Gateway, Postma said Syracuse ENT has increased the efficiency of its claims process and reduced its claims rejection rate without the need to use another system. “We were able to get right through the integration and it worked out great. The system for billing was very easy-- as long as you know your charges and your billing you are set to go. I can actually look at claims that were submitted and see if the carrier has received the claims or not. If they have submitted it and the carrier is not acknowledging it then you really have to look into that to say, ‘Well they got the claims, then why aren’t they acknowledging receiving that report?’ You can act on it quickly,” asserted Postma.

When Postma’s work day begins she tackles any rejected claims and Waiting Room Solutions informs her every day if she had any claims that were submitted prior to that, if they were rejected and why they were rejected. “For this whole week I had just one claim that was rejected because the identification number was incorrect,” boasted Postma.

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## Efficiency in Cash Flow and Workflow

Electronic funds transfer is yet another capability that Syracuse ENT depends on. Waiting Room Solutions informs Postma what funds were automatically transferred to Syracuse ENT’s banking account. “I’m able to download those EOB’s and I just copy and paste them from their web site to WRS. I can look at each claim individually,” said Postma.

When it comes to combatting claims that are rejected for such problems as duplicate diagnosis codes, missing information such as admission dates, or incorrect identification numbers, Postma said Waiting Room Solutions comes to the rescue again. “Waiting Room Solutions is very easy. It highlights the field. It will show you what you could do to improve those rejections.”

## Usability Is Key to Progress

Ease of use is yet another reason why Postma championed Waiting Room Solutions. But Postma’s accolades don’t stop there. She credited Waiting Room Solutions with its ability to pull up diagnosis codes and to look at different things. “If you don’t have the book right there handy, Waiting

Room Solutions will give you a drop down box to search codes. This is nice because it gives you a better range of things. If you are used to one thing (code), there might now be a better code out there. It definitely helps the doctors. The doctors do their diagnosis codes. It's great that it's able to carry over, but if I know there is a more specific code they could have used then it's easy to say, 'This is it.' They (the doctors) have a code in their head. There may be a more specific code. I can pull it up and say, 'It needs to be this way.' You need the diagnosis code to link up with the claims in your system. If there's a diagnosis code that's unacceptable for a certain procedure, Waiting Room Solutions will flag you and that's very nice. That's a way to correct things quickly."

Postma couldn't be more satisfied that she has done away with paper charts. "We just moved our location in August and we had to bring all charts in if we were three years still on paper. That's three more years worth of charts we would have had to have brought. It reduced the amount of paper we would have had to bring," she said.

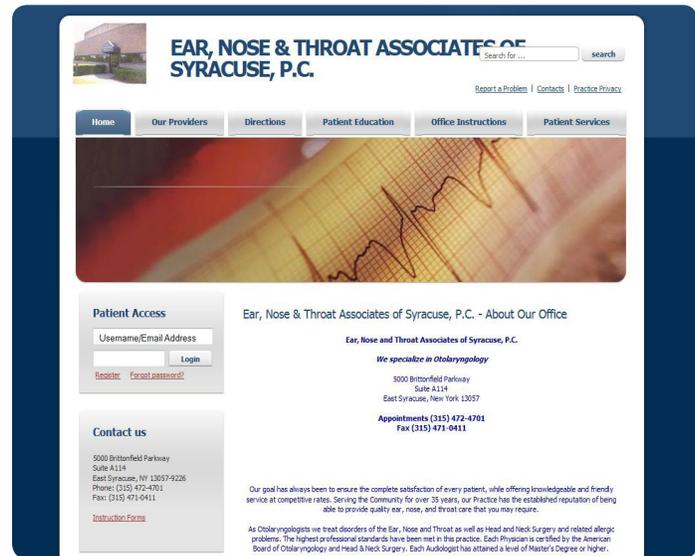
## **Straight A's in Revenue Cycle Management**

Like a student in a class who received straight A's on her report card, Postma is jubilant that she aced a billing analysis report conducted by Waiting Room Solutions for a three month period. "I did great. I'm really on top of it. The report shows your billing charges and the number of codes you billed. Ninety days in A/R (accounts receivable)-- anything that's been sitting out there over three months, really, really, really should be looked at. That's money that's out there that shouldn't even be out there. You shouldn't have a lot of money that's in an insurance company that's out there over 90 days without some explanation. With some insurance companies you only have 45 days to submit a claim. So if you have a lot of claims out there over 90 days, most of your contracts say they can turn around and deny it and say you failed to file the claim within 45 days. It could be lost revenue. The majority of my 90 days are actually patient balance. Waiting Room Solutions helped me to make sure I filed my claims in a timely manner," reported Postma.

## **Keeping Patients Accountable**

Collecting copayments from patients is yet another hurdle that Postma jumped over. "If we check a patient in and they have a copay we try to collect a copayment before the patients are seen because Waiting Room Solutions system acknowledges that and says 'yes, they do have a copay.' Postma said that some patients are reluctant to pay until services are rendered. "We check a patient in and then Waiting Room Solutions says they have a copay due at the time of service. We get the copayment right then and there. It means patients don't leave here without paying their copays. With an older system, where you aren't keeping track of who's where, patients can come and go and you don't even know that they've left. Then you're sending a bill-- you have a statement going out. There's lost revenue there and you are not going to get the full copay because now you're sending out statements."

Being able to check patients' eligibility with insurance companies has also been a boon to Syracuse ENT. "If we have an insurance card under a patient's name who was here last month, and of April 1 their insurance is changing it will tell us if they are eligible or not eligible. We have signed up for Real Time eligibility which is wonderful. That means we can ask the patient, did you get new insurance this month because Waiting Room Solutions is telling us. Waiting Room Solutions is able to go right into their insurance company's web site. There are little color boxes. Green means go, red tells us there might be a problem with it. Sometimes patients don't willingly tell you that they changed insurance," informed Postma.



## E-Prescribing Accuracy and Immediacy

E-prescribing is yet another feature that Syracuse ENT can't live without. "There are no pharmacies calling and saying, 'I can't read the doctor's script or the medication dosage is wrong.' And it goes automatically-- it's e-scribed to them through the EMR system. It saves on paper, saves on printers, saves on mailing it to the patient and it saves phone calls with the staff. They aren't on hold with the pharmacy to call in a prescription. It's wonderful," said Postma.

## Everything Runs Smoothly

Finally, Postma summed up Syracuse ENT's experience in these words: "The best thing about WRS is that it's web based so you can access it from anywhere. When we went live, Larry Gordon, M.D., Waiting Room Solutions CEO and his staff were with us. They helped us. There are no problems. Everything runs smoothly," concluded Postma.