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Lily Hargrove, M.D.

Ivy Family Medicine

Charlottesville, VA

Ivy Family Medicine Puts Down Roots and Climbs with WRS

If you think it’s impossible for a solo family practitioner to launch a new family practice and achieve good cash flow, have a rejection rate that is below the industry average and be debt free in only six months, think again.

Dr. Lily Hargrove, who opened Ivy Family Medicine in Charlottesville, VA, in May 2011, is doing all of these things while providing quality care to her patients. And, she still has spare time to spend with her family and friends. How do you think she does it?

“I chose WRS EMR in December of 2010, six months before I opened. I have a low overhead practice which is part of the reason why I chose WRS. I liked WRS monthly price and compared to having a server in the office, the setup fee was reasonable. I thought the package offered good value for the money and I liked the way it is set up,” said Dr. Hargrove.

Dr. Hargrove scrutinized seven EMR systems. “WRS was the first EMR that I looked at in-depth and that always sets your expectations. That’s the one you compare the next one to, in order to decide which of the two is better and you move forward from there. I perceived WRS to be more fluid. I thought that the customer service was phenomenal, so I felt like I was going to be really well supported,” said Dr. Hargrove.

More Bang for the Buck

Performing billing functions with a limited budget and a one person staff, can be a harrowing experience. “I knew that I wasn’t going to do my own billing. I walked into this new practice know-

WRS CLIENT CASE STUDIES

ing it was going to be electronic. It's a very low overhead practice; there's not a lot of moving parts outside of insurance. I knew that I would be outsourcing the billing, and for me not to have to do anything extra and for WRS to be able to go into the EMR, pull what they need and communicate with me about what they need was very appealing. WRS charges a reasonable rate, which is great. I wanted a complete practice management system and I wanted to think about billing as little as possible."

Noting that her office staffer Jennifer enters checks and copays in WRS with ease, Dr. Hargrove said, "When she hasn't been there, I have done it. WRS is an intuitive system. It doesn't have a lot of nooks and crannies. It's working well. Our rejection rate is much lower than the (industry) average. We get our money quickly. We are usually paid within 90 days. From our end, when we communicate with the people who do the billing, we've been very happy. There haven't been any problems. When one or two claims have come into question, they email me a question, I fix it and send it back. WRS is doing the absolute best job and our experience has been that the cash flow is good. I'm getting paid what I should. We're getting reimbursed in a timely manner. It's huge. I was debt free in six months and WRS was a big part of that," Dr. Hargrove said.

"The ability to customize on the fly is incredible."

Pick a Phrase, Any Phrase

Charting can be a complicated and time consuming task for a practice that has patients of all ages. "WRS is really nicely customizable. I free text the HPI (History of Present Illness). You can pull up the template and cross out the words that you don't want and create a coherent HPI. Under Review of Systems and Physical Examination you can type in terms that you typically would use if you were dictating," said Dr. Hargrove.

Dr. Hargrove gave the example of the ease with which she charts cardiovascular patients. "You have 'neck pain,' 'chest pain,' 'jaw pain' and 'lightheadedness with exertion.' In the Physical Examination, there are different body parts you would go through when you examine somebody's heart. If I hear a normal exam I would say the heart has a regular rate and rhythm with normal S1, S2 and no murmurs. I was able to type that in as an option that I could click on or put it in as my default for normal. That customizability without having to go back to WRS, the ability to

customize on the fly, is incredible. I have that as a clickable option as opposed to having to go back to the EMR company, to customize it on their end. I can set that template at my end without bothering WRS. You can choose the phrasing of the things you commonly use. It's a matter of pointing and clicking through it. As I am doing the Review of Systems, I can pull down and click on the phrase that I want and if it's something extraordinary, I just free text it in. It's incredibly easy to have the note fluid and natural sounding without having to talk to anybody else about it. I can customize myself right there. It's unbelievably easy to do. WRS is very fluid and it's easy."

"Templates are very helpful for preventative exams."

Dr. Hargrove continued, "Templates are very helpful for preventative exams. For a physical exam, I enter typical physical exam and I'll tweak it. If I'm listening to the heart and I hear a murmur where I didn't before, the rest of the exam is populated and in the line for heart exam, I erase 'normal exam' and say 'murmur heard today.' Until recently I saw my patients without a note in front of me, but my practice has grown and being able to look at the previous HPI while you are in the note is really helpful. Being able to review the prior note and peek at labs before you see a patient helps you create the framework for what you have got to do during that physical."

Baby Talk

Charting newborns' milestones and keeping track of their immunizations is a huge responsibility. "There's a pediatric note you can populate with milestones. It prompts you to put in things like birth complications and birth history. There's a pediatrics template that is helpful. You can go through and point and click, is the child rolling over, smiling, grasping with two hands, etc. If I am going to give pneumococcal vaccination, I have a procedure code. In the administration I can go back and every time pneumococcal vaccination is administered the note is populated with the ICD-9 code for the pneumococcal vaccination. All I have to do is go into my Orders and Procedures page and click on Prevnar 13® and as soon as I click and enter it as a procedure the EMR will put in my Assessment and Plan, 'need for pneumococcal vaccination.' You can tie a procedure to a certain Assessment and Plan. Every time I enter that I gave the vaccine, there's the date and lot number with every vaccine. As soon as I let the EMR know I am doing that vaccine, it will put in the note, 'The child needed a Prevnar® and it was given today.'"

Let's Get Physical(s)

Charting physicals can be very time consuming, especially when you perform 15 physicals a week. "WRS EMR helps me with physicals. I can create a note that is an adolescent physical exam. I know what bullets I have to hit for the school sports physicals. When someone comes in, I clear out the physical from the previous visit and I click on templates and it populates with the adolescent CPE (Complete Physical Exam) which has all the things I like to hit on the physical, my Assessment and Plan, advice given and I can tweak it," said Dr. Hargrove.

"It's not a complicated system. It's intuitive and each step makes sense. We've been able to navigate our way through it. I hit the ground running with it. The WRS Team has been super quick to fix anything. The responsiveness and support is really great."

Go With Your Intuition

Learning a new system can be vexing. "We figured it out. It's not a complicated system. It's intuitive and each step makes sense. We've been able to navigate our way through it. I hit the ground running with it. The WRS Team has been super quick to fix anything. The responsiveness and support is really great," Dr. Hargrove said.

Lookin' Good

When it comes to sending her notes to other practices, Dr. Hargrove boasted, "WRS creates a more natural looking note. I have two local colleagues who say, 'I get your notes, I like how they look.' The notes are readable and fluid. When sending a note to a colleague it's nice to be able to pull down your note, click fax, and then there's a box that comes up where you can enter the doctor and just send it. Other notes I've seen pull up every last thing you did. You can make WRS note look like you wrote this note just for this patient. And that is always what we should be doing, but it doesn't always happen."

The Electronic Edge

How does a solo practitioner respond to patients' requests for medication when they are off the clock and don't have back up coverage? "E-prescribing has been helpful. I don't have any (back

up) coverage, so if I'm on vacation with my family I can click and point and send Rx's. WRS e-prescribing is portable, which is really helpful," said Dr. Hargrove.

Your Lab Order is Here

To keep costs down, she doesn't have a phlebotomist to draw blood or an X-ray machine on site. So, Dr. Hargrove makes up for any inconvenience to patients by using WRS Fax Queue for lab orders. "We can say, 'We'll e-fax the order from here and it will be waiting for you at the lab.' Some people will take the orders with them from my office but if we are following up on something and I need to order a second test, it's nice for them to be able to walk into the lab and the lab order is there. It's a small enough town that both labs I work with know who I am and they know to look out for the faxes. It's nice because people can just walk in and it's ready. Patients have better things to do with their time than wait," said Dr. Hargrove.

"We use the patient appointment reminder system a lot and I'm grateful for that."

You Have An appointment

No show patients can negatively affect the bottom line and inconvenience patients who are waiting for an opening. "We use the patient appointment reminder system a lot and I'm grateful for that. We send an email and the automatic reminder call and it helps a lot. I only see 12 to 17 people a day, and there are more patients who want to see me. If somebody is going to be a no show, the spot can be given to another patient. More often than not, somebody is waiting for that spot. We try to leave the office at 6 p.m. WRS helps to reduce the no shows and that's a huge benefit, especially for a practice this small," said Dr. Hargrove.

Reminders for Health Maintenance are Key

With 40% of her patients coming in for preventative health services and 60% visiting for acute care, it's crucial that Dr. Hargrove has an EMR system that reminds her about follow ups. "If you see a man over age 50 who has a diagnosis of high blood pressure, when you check them in a reminder pops up saying, Have you checked the lipid profile? Have you checked cholesterol within the last six months? You can create rules for health maintenance and monitoring of chronic illness which you are prompted to consider when a patient comes in," she said.

A Perfect Balance

Pointing out that from 2005 to 2011 she worked at a very busy hospital-owned family practice, where she felt that the volume of patients impacted the quality of care that she could provide, Dr. Hargrove said, “I loved the old practice, but I realized I was just able to meet the demands of being a physician. It left me too fried to do much more than that. I wasn’t practicing the medicine I was capable of. I was just done when I wasn’t in the office. This practice was to create a life balance. Now patients leave my room and their note is done two minutes later. It’s done, it’s not hanging over me. Having an EMR that’s that flexible and the setting of the practice I’ve created has helped with the balance I was looking for. It’s not concierge medicine, but it’s easy access and pretty unfettered contact with the doctor.”

The Look, the Feel of Comfort

So, how did she come up with the name Ivy Family Medicine? “My practice is located in Ivy, in Charlottesville, Va. I thought Ivy Family Medicine sounded cute,” said Dr. Hargrove.

When Dr. Hargrove describes the look and feel of her office, it’s apparent that she gave a lot of thought to making her 400 square foot office look “comfortable and casual. The waiting room looks like you are walking into someone’s living room. There are reupholstered chairs and tables, a humongous chalk board on one corner of the wall, a table and chairs for kids, magazines like Us, Real Simple and Time that everyone always wants to read, and really bright art work. My exam room doesn’t look like a doctor’s office. I have a brightly patterned room divider. On one half is the exam table and the other half is my desk. The most important part of my office is where the patient sits when they talk to me because that’s where we spend most of the time. I don’t think it looks like a doctor’s office. It’s comfortable and casual. Because we have timed my appointments for 20, 40, or 60 minutes, and not 10, 15, or 30 minutes, there is time to talk and time to get the blood pressure down. You are not being rushed. I don’t have a nurse. People come in and sit and start talking to me. I get their vital signs. I give kids their shots. It’s definitely a comfortable place.”

The Road Not Originally Taken

So, now that Dr. Hargrove has her own business, WRS asked if she is fulfilling a long lived dream. “When I went to medical school I never ever, in a million years thought I’d have my own place. It was never my intention. It’s a good balance. The patients are getting better care from me than they were when I was at my other practice. My husband says, ‘Don’t you see a difference in yourself?’ By not increasing my overhead, WRS has contributed to that. I don’t have to pay for a \$20,000 EMR. It’s easy enough for me and Jennifer to navigate WRS. The EMR is not a source of stress or contention in the office. It fits in there perfectly. This is a super low overhead. I walked

into this situation with a lot less stress than a lot of other doctors. My intention was to practice medicine for my patients and for my family and well-being. We've been pleasantly surprised this has been very successful. Part of the reason is that I'm reimbursed well, reimbursed in a timely manner, the EMR costs are not killing me, they are not extraordinary and it's reasonably priced," stated Dr. Hargrove.

When it comes to having more quality time, WRS customers have yet to credit WRS for helping them to get an exercise workout in. That is until Dr. Hargrove came along. "I have two kids. WRS makes me less crazy, so mom and dad can exercise. I don't like to exercise, but I have to, so I do it and it's fine," she said.

Finally, Dr. Hargrove summed up what it's like to have a new practice and WRS EMR with these words, "I'm more efficient than I would have been without WRS. This works well. WRS really has a very flexible product that can speak to a wide range of practices. It is nicely customizable for any specialty. It's a flexible EMR with good value and those are the two things I really needed. Certifications, the quality of support, and quality of notes I could generate were important. WRS met the needs of my office. It was very reasonably priced and I liked the people at the other end of the line."