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Emily Gordon, M.D.

Vital Signs Medical Associates

Middletown, NY

Vital Signs are Strong with WRS EMR

When Emily Gordon, M.D. partnered with Alexander Fruchter, M.D. to open Vital Signs Medical Associates in Middletown, NY in July 2011 she knew that they didn’t want to have paper charts. Given both doctors’ robust patient load, it is not surprising that they were seeking to jumpstart their efficiency from the beginning. Dr. Gordon, who practices on a part-time basis and specializes in preventive medicine, nutrition and holistic care, treats about 50 patients a week. Dr. Fruchter, who specializes in Internal Medicine and Pulmonary Critical Care serves 100 patients a week. Both physicians are associated with Orange Regional Medical Center.

“We never had paper charts in this practice and hadn’t used an EMR prior to WRS. We were looking for a system that would be easy to use and would cut back on chart problems, such as locating charts and lost documents as well as the office staff needing to deal with charting and finding charts. It’s easier and more efficient to keep everything in one place.” said Dr. Gordon.

Billing Module Makes Efficiency Soar

Starting a practice with an efficient billing system is critical for financial success. “We use WRS Billing Services and Module, which have been highly efficient. WRS Billing Services are great: the fees are low, I can track everything on the computer, and it’s very easy for me to look at it. I also go over everything once every two months with Kathleen or another WRS Billing staff person.

Kathleen gives us feedback, such as where large groups are falling through, what kinds of copays are missing and how to better get the copays at the front desk. WRS has little tools and tricks to help increase your copay amount in such a way that also helps maintain patient relationships. It's a very friendly system," said Dr. Gordon.

Templates Offer Convenience

How can templates streamline a physician's workflow? "The immunization template is very helpful. I list all of the immunizations and any time we give an immunization in the office, I just open the template, click and it loads all of the different codes I need for each immunization without having to click on them separately. For example, I can just click on Adacel® and it loads the J code and the V code. The codes are already built in for all immunizations and all procedures we do. It's really very easy. Our Assessment Plan page is preloaded so we can find our most common diagnoses. Not only is there a click system where you can find your most common diagnoses, but there is also a list of your most common diagnoses that you can find very easily. Additionally, there is a way to move the most common diagnoses over from your past medical history page and have them show up on your Assessment Plan page. It's very easy to load the Assessment Plan page from the note without having to search for diagnosis codes," said Dr. Gordon.

Keeping Track of Visits

Keeping track of patients' previous complaints and problems is crucial in providing quality care. "With chief complaints, I can generate a list of five or six diagnoses that I am following and that I'm actively engaged in, in about a half a minute, just from the note itself," said Dr. Gordon.

Noting that she always has two (computer) screens open, Dr. Gordon said, "When a patient comes in, I'll often have the note open with the Assessment Plan, which reflects the previous Assessment Plan list. I can ask them, 'How is this going? How is your blood pressure? I noticed last time we changed your blood pressure medication.' I can easily glance at the screen and know all the different things I did during their last visit. I can track it very easily. Then, all I need to do is change what I'm doing this visit and keep everything else the same. I don't have to re-

write the new list of diagnoses each time. I can delete them but I don't have to rewrite a new list. When you might not be actively engaging in somebody's cholesterol for example, and they come in for something else, you can treat the problem and this way you can always follow it."

The Low Down on No Shows

No shows are a drag on a practice's bottom line. "We use WRS Appointment Reminders. We have a very low no show rate, and it's partly because of the automated reminders. If someone gets a reminder and they forgot they had an appointment, they either show up or call before and cancel so it definitely cuts down on the no show rate," said Dr. Gordon.

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Fax Queue Line-Up

Faxes can get lost in the shuffle which can be detrimental to a practice's efficiency as well as have negative consequences on a patient's health. "We never lose faxes with WRS Fax Queue. It is easy to use and extremely organized so you don't miss a paper that's misfiled in the chart. It's always there and you can always open it any time. It's very easy to label, to see what you've labeled, and to change the label if there's something in there that you didn't realize was there. It's a great way to not lose data," said Dr. Gordon.

Caring for Patients from Home

Being able to access patients' records when you are not in the office is imperative, especially if you practice part time. "If I'm at home or on vacation or anywhere, I can check my patient's data. I don't have to rely on my coverage because WRS allows me to stay on top of my patients. If I need a phone number, I can look it up myself. It's really, very helpful to have a web-based EMR.

Patients also feel more comfortable knowing that their data won't be lost because WRS is secure. I do a lot of work from home because I work part time, so I spend a couple of hours each day on lab results and calling patients back for questions. I do a lot of that when I'm not in the office because I can access WRS from anywhere. It makes the patients feel that they are being taken care of," stated Dr. Gordon.

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MU Money Comes in Handy

Starting a new practice is expensive, but receiving Meaningful Use incentives can ease the financial burden. “WRS has helped me to receive two years of Meaningful Use incentives so far. I feel very lucky that there was a lot of extra money from the government that helped us to buy the equipment and get the training we needed. We would have had to use our own pocket money if we weren't able to get the MU money, and that was a really great reimbursement. WRS helped us to get the funds. If you have questions, WRS has the answers and they offer help if you have a hard time applying for MU,” stated Dr. Gordon.

Go To People

Implementing an EMR can be an ordeal and problems that arise can throw a kink into a smooth workflow. Not so with WRS, says Dr. Gordon. “When we have questions, we have a couple of ‘go to’ people who we call and they answer our questions. Usually it's something that's pretty obvious after we do it once or twice. Typically it's pretty straightforward, they just point us in the right direction and it becomes one more thing in the system that we participate in.”

Easy Transition

Getting up to speed on a new system can be a harrowing experience. “The future of medicine is EMR and computerization. There was no question that we had to just learn it and do it. When you go in with that attitude, you do whatever you need to do. What helped was that WRS was easy to get up to speed on,” said Dr. Gordon.

“WRS is affordable. We don’t need as many office staff members or a person to chart. We have fewer people working for us because so much is done on the computer.”

E-Prescribing is a Must

When queried about if WRS e-prescribing capability increases her efficiency on a daily basis, Dr. Gordon was quick to reply, “Absolutely. You can keep track of every Rx you wrote just by clicking on ‘view all actions’ and it tells you what you’ve written. If a patient calls, within five minutes they can have one prescription or five prescriptions sent and you never have to pick up the phone to call the pharmacy. I have found it to be extremely useful. I don’t have to look up dosages, because when I load the name of the medication, WRS EMR lists all of the dosage choices for me. It lets me know what’s available so I don’t ever have to get a dosage wrong.”

The Price is Right

When it comes to purchasing an EMR, price is a major consideration, especially for a new practice. “WRS is affordable. We don’t need as many office staff members or a person to chart. We have fewer people working for us because so much is done on the computer,” pointed out Dr. Gordon.

Great Expectations

When asked to pinpoint what she likes best about WRS, Dr. Gordon couldn’t name just one feature or benefit. “I like WRS automated Patient Reminders because our staff doesn’t have

to spend time making those phone calls. I also like the fact that the billing is hooked up with the EMR so that you're only dealing with one company and that it is very streamlined. Everything works together so you are getting the maximum coding. The people who read my notes are the people who bill, so if I missed a code on something they put it in there for me. The WRS Team is always checking to make sure that I have everything I need for my billing. For me, it's been great. Everything is going very smoothly, our practice is thriving and WRS is a big part of that," said Dr. Gordon.

More Free Time

Finally, having a cloud EMR enables Dr. Gordon to accomplish work at home and also to spend more time with her family. "Because WRS is web-based, I can do all of my paperwork from home, meaning I don't have to come into the office, and can spend more time with my family," concluded Dr. Gordon.