

Texas Ob/Gyn Practice Leverages Patient Portal to Connect with Patients



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Obstetrics and Gynecology Comprehensive Women’s Healthcare Grapevine, Texas

Imagine these scenarios: A woman suddenly remembers that it’s time to make an appointment with her Ob/Gyn physician but the office is closed. Not to worry. She logs on to a patient portal to request an appointment. The next day the staff sees her request and schedules the appointment. Meanwhile, another patient sits in front of her computer and fills out all of the required healthcare medical forms prior to her first Ob/Gyn appointment, saving her time and increasing the efficiency of the medical practice.



Waiting Room Solutions EMR & Practice Management System for obstetrics and gynecology offices has turned these scenarios into reality for Comprehensive Women’s Healthcare, a Grapevine, Texas-based Ob/Gyn practice. Staffed by two physicians and a nurse practitioner, Comprehensive Women’s Healthcare serves about 100 patients a day. The practice is reaping a plethora of benefits from using Waiting Room Solutions.

“We were using a patient portal three to four years ago. This was our first EMR. There aren’t many EMR companies that have a patient portal capability. We weren’t evaluating an EMR if they didn’t have this feature. WRS online patient portal impressed us because our patients can go online and accomplish a lot of things,” said Barbara Buckley, the nurse practitioner at Comprehensive Women’s Healthcare.

““If a patient learns that they need a prescription refill and they are at Walgreens in the evening, the pharmacist can send an electronic message authorization.”

WRS CLIENT CASE STUDIES

Practice Website Before:



Practice Website Using WRS Patient Portal:



Computer Magic

Emphasizing that the patient portal saves patients time and increases the efficiency of Comprehensive Women's Healthcare, Buckley said, "We have put all of our forms online so that all of our patients can fill out their paperwork before they come in. The patient portal also allows patients to request appointments. In this day and age of e-mail it is a way to let patients keep in touch with us. It is also HIPAA compliant. If it is midnight and patients want to request an appointment they can message us and we can set up an appointment when we open the office."

Patients who need to receive prescription refills find that WRS patient portal is convenient. Then add quote from directly above to this sentence," Buckley said.

The practice is also answering requests from patients with WRS General Messaging capability.

"If our office is closed and patients are at home and they have a billing or medical question, they can still pose the question. Because we use WRS Messaging, patients can make a query about an appointment, their condition, a refill or a bill. The question is waiting and we answer it soon as we see it," she explained.

Buckley also praised Waiting Room Solutions for being user friendly because many doctors and patients may not have high tech skills. "Our previous system was not as user friendly as WRS. This system combines electronic records and a lot of information sharing. It was easy to train our employees and patients. Once they get their user name and password and get logged in it's fairly self explanatory to navigate around the website."

The patient portal also enables patients to input their medical history, surgical history, family history, medications, allergies and social history on 'My Health Records' prior to their first visit. "It's a huge time saver in healthcare. You get up to the minute, accurate information," claimed Buckley.

Since patients don't want to spend a lot of time in the waiting room, the patient portal enhances

the quality of the time that patients spend with physicians. “When our patients are in the office they can spend time talking about their health and not filling out paperwork.”



Making Connections

There’s no doubt that Waiting Room Solutions EMR is superior when it comes to enabling doctors to share information when patients are in the hospital. “We are surgeons dealing with newborn deliveries and it is necessary to share our information with the hospital. Having an EMR where we can share information and access it from any computer is really nice. If the doctor is in the operating room in delivery or doing surgery they can access the patient’s chart from any computer and retrieve an operative report or pathology report,” said Buckley.

Buckley is also finding that Waiting Room Solutions fax capabilities are indispensable. “We can fax notes so quickly to a family doctor or referring doctor. This is a nice feature. We’re getting e-prescriptions and refills out. If you prescribe something for a patient in the office, by the time they get to the pharmacy the prescription is already done versus the old way where patients used to bring a paper prescription, wait an hour and come back.”

Noting that there are unscrupulous people who visit multiple pharmacies to fill pain medication prescriptions, Buckley said having a way to track prescriptions online can help track and prevent

fraud as well as medical errors. “It’s the same thing for healthcare, there are some clients who may not have the capacity to tell you about everything—this is especially true with older patients. They may get a CT scan in one emergency room and a week later they get a CT scan in another emergency room. If we had continuity of care everybody would know that the patient had a CT scan a week before,” she advised.

Training Is A No Brainer

When it came to implementing WRS, Comprehensive Women’s Healthcare did not encounter any barriers training its staff and patients. “We made a lot of handouts for patients. We did a screen shot of what it would look like once they logged in. We showed them where to put their user name and password and showed them what the screen would look like when they are logged in. We showed them, ‘Here’s where your test results will be.’ I also made business cards with instructions on the ins and outs of how to navigate the online system and I displayed charts in every room. Patients are very visual,” Buckley explained.

So, what are patients saying about the EHR now that they are using it? “We hear stories such as ‘I’m so glad you have the patient portal because I work nights.’ ‘I do shift work.’ ‘I’m a flight attendant.’ Having the ability to access this system 24/7 for these people is very helpful. Not every job is 9 to 5, so not everyone can call when we are open. Waiting Room Solutions has so many functions—WRS has an Information Printout feature that provides patients with a three page summary of their family history, social history, pharmacy information and medical history. If they are going to see another doctor or going to the Emergency Room, patients can bring this summary with them.”

Pointing out that lab connections were established one month after going live with Waiting Room Solutions in October 2011, Buckley said, “Lab results go directly in patients’ records and can be viewed by the patient after our review under My Test Results. The number one question people ask me is, ‘When did I have my PAP test?’ Now they can go back and see when they had the test and the test results. They get to print out PDFs of their labs. It looks like I copied it and mailed it to them. It’s the exact same copy. It’s beautiful,” said Buckley.

Buckley also praised Waiting Room Solutions for helping the practice to be more efficient. “When you think of time and efficiency—you can see more patients and you save more on office supplies. If you are using the EMR you are extremely efficient and it should allow you to see more patients,” she said.

Paper Is Old School

Perhaps one of the most attractive rewards for selecting WRS is that it is enabling Comprehensive Women's Healthcare to provide the highest quality of care to patients. "It allows you to be more thorough. Our paper records were not that thorough. We were not doing a great job making adjustments to the paper. We were not getting good health histories," acknowledged Buckley, adding "This record has the ability to time stamp everything and there is more ability to become accurate. The more information you know about the patient, the better it is going to be to treat them. People forget all the time that they didn't tell you they had something done. There are a lot of changes that occur in a year. You hand them that piece of paper, they are in the waiting room and are in a hurry to get seen. They may not remember that someone in their family died of cancer or had a heart attack or a stroke, or if they had a colonoscopy or knee surgery. To get people to get online and spend the time to give an accurate health experience helps their healthcare," said Buckley.

Finally, Buckley couldn't say enough about Waiting Room Solutions being receptive to her needs. "WRS makes lots of advancements. If people give them good ideas they are not afraid to say, 'This is a great idea and we'll do it for everybody.' They implement changes. They've done a lot of that even in the short time that I've been one of their customers. If it's something that makes sense and it's efficient they'll definitely make a change to their EMR system. They love to serve their clients."