

Sage Intergrity EHR | Success Story

Urology Consultants of North Shore, Inc.

Going Electronic with Sage Intergrity and Sage Intergrity EHR

● CHALLENGE

Update practice management system with a focus on improving access to data and enhancing workflow. Create a paperless office.

● SOLUTION

Implement Sage Intergrity and Sage Intergrity EHR. Old charts are scanned as patients are seen. No new charts are created. Electronic documentation of clinical tasks and patient encounters saves time and will eventually eliminate the need for dictation and transcription.

● RESULTS

Reduced yearly costs by: \$2000 on charting supplies, \$5,000 on transcription; Expects to reduce transcription another \$60,000; 10 minutes per chart pull eliminated; Reduced claim turn around by 6-7 days; Reduced Medicare claims turnaround to 2 weeks; Saving 15 hours a week on payment posting.

SPECIALTY

Urology

LOCATION

Massachusetts

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS

One

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

Seven Physicians, One Physician's Assistant, 30 Support Staff

SOLUTIONS USED

Sage Intergrity

Sage Intergrity EHR

Going Paperless with the Sage Intergrity Suite

For 27 years Mary Sue Ring has been working at Urology Consultants of North Shore, becoming the administrator 18 years ago. She has helped make many decisions about how to improve the management of the business, including the decision, in 2003, to implement Sage Intergrity and Sage Intergrity EHR.

The enterprise had initially automated its practice management in 1985, but eventually the group realized it wasn't enough and a change was needed. After six months of research, Ring and the seven physicians decided the Sage Intergrity system was the best solution for their needs. Sage Intergrity provided improved access to data in all areas significantly enhancing the overall workflow throughout the offices.

"If you asked anyone in my office what they think about a paperless environment, they would say that they love the electronic chart," says Ring when asked about having all charts in the system instead of on paper. "Everything is right at your fingertips from history to transcribed notes. The accessibility of the patient chart to all the offices, physicians, billing, front desk and even me is so great."

Instantly Accessing Patient Information and Reducing Charting Expenses

This accessibility has resulted in time savings as well as a reduction in overhead. From the day the system was installed, Urology Consultants stopped making paper charts and began scanning older charts as patients were seen. The result was instant access to patient information from check-in to billing. This was especially beneficial in cases where charts would have been couriered from one office to another prior to combining their three offices into one larger location. In addition, the practice saw an immediate reduction in charting expenses of about \$2000 a year. No new charts and the rapid elimination of the old ones also meant that Ring could plan a move to new office space without including chart storage space in the layout.

For patients, the improved accessibility has meant improved care and service. "If a patient calls now anyone can address the issue right away," says Ring. "We can see documentation of everything from the time they checked in to the time they checked out." Patients no longer wait for responses to simple questions about appointments, prescriptions, or billing, which has relieved congestion at the front desk and for the nurses. In the past, it generally took about ten minutes just to pull the chart so most patients would have to wait for a return call. Now, it takes only seconds to pull up the electronic chart.

Spending Less Time on Clinical Tasks

Providers are also reaping a wealth of benefits from the increased access to up-to-date patient data. According to Ring, "It isn't just that tasks like prescriptions have been simplified from 3 or 4 steps to 1 or 2 steps, it's also that as a task is completed it is automatically being documented in the chart, which saves time and improves accuracy." Physicians are spending less time managing these types of clinical tasks, and there are more tasks that can be done by other clinical staff.

The dictation and transcription process has also been enhanced, improving both the clinicians' workflow and the transcriptionist workflow as well as reducing operating costs. Currently, Urology Consultants is using the Transcription Management System in Sage Intergy, which enables them to move dictated notes through the system much faster. At the moment, it is saving them about \$5,000 a year, but this is a transitional step for the practice. They recently implemented electronic encounter documentation, which is eliminating dictation and transcription completely. Ring expects this to reduce costs by another \$60,000 a year while further speeding access to up-to-date patient data.

Improving Turnaround Times for Claims

On the billing side, the practice has seen extensive changes. From using eligibility to verify coverage before services are rendered to sending claims and statements electronically, the practice has used electronic data interchange to improve claim turnaround by 6-7 days on average. Medicare claims have improved even more than private payers with a turnaround of about two weeks down from an average of two months before Sage Intergy. "We have really been able to get a handle on our A/R and clean it up," Ring says. "When a \$30,000 Medicare EOB can be posted in 10 minutes instead of three hours, it frees up staff to work on more important collections tasks." She estimates the billing office is saving at least 15 hours a week on EOB posting with Sage Intergy. The ability to quickly access patient information has also played a role in these improvements, enabling the billing staff to look up information, print or fax documents and resubmit claims in seconds.

Go Back to Paper? No Way...

Mary Sue Ring says over and over again that she and the staff at Urology Consultants love Sage Intergy. No one wants to go back to a manual, paper-based system now that they are essentially paperless and getting more and more streamlined everyday. "Using Sage Intergy has allowed us to do things we could never do before," says Ring. "We have run complicated reports in minutes, reorganized our billing office to be more effective, streamlined physician workflow, and improved the patient experience in so many ways."



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