



Case study

David E. Amos, M.D.

David E. Amos, M.D., has been in private family practice in Milwaukee since finishing residency in 1974. His clinic employs a full-time office manager and three part-time medical assistants who share front-office responsibilities. As the clinic's sole provider, he sees approximately 100 patients per week. His patient population ranges in age from newborns to senior citizens. Of his more than 30 years of service in the same community, Dr. Amos said, "I have been in practice long enough that I am treating the children of the babies I've delivered."

CHALLENGES

While still enjoying the practice of family medicine, Dr. Amos was growing weary of the paperwork. With nearly half of his claims going to Medicare or Medicaid, his records were routinely audited.

"These occasions were very stressful for me. Paper charts are never truly complete and any doctor will tell you that it is impossible to write down everything that happens in an encounter with a patient, especially when the note is completed at the end of the day," said Dr. Amos. "Further, there were times when my penmanship was illegible even to me."

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This pressure, combined with declining reimbursements and the prospect of further cutbacks, had convinced Dr. Amos that retirement in 2008 might be his best option. The challenge, as he saw it in early 2006, was how to make his final two years of private practice as enjoyable and rewarding as possible.

SOLUTION

Because of his lack of familiarity with computers, Dr. Amos assumed the transition to using electronic health records would be difficult. However, his opinion changed after a demonstration of MedcomSoft Record 2006 V 3.0. (CCHIT Certified in 2006). Immediately, he knew it would solve his audit issues. Dr. Amos selected the EHR for use in his practice.

“I had no idea what a significant impact the electronic health record would have on my practice,” he said. “As I learned more about the system’s capabilities, I was increasingly impressed by its ability to improve the way I practice medicine.”

Despite that fact that he planned to use his EHR system for only two years, the promise of worry-free audits was enough for Dr. Amos to overcome any concern he had about the investment.

Today, he carries a tablet PC instead of a clipboard. “Now I just click my way through a protocol and the note is done before I leave the exam room.”

RESULTS

The benefits to his clinic and his lifestyle have been profound. In the first year after implementation, Dr. Amos’ clinic was audited five times, all without incident.

“My clinical documentation is completely prepared for auditing at any point,” Dr. Amos said. “That alone removes a great deal of stress.”

Further, Dr. Amos says his charts are more complete. “I am charting at the point of care, so I miss nothing and because of that we are billing more accurately.”

As a result, the clinic’s average billing rate has increased more than 30 percent. In addition, Dr. Amos’ clinic has become more efficient. He had previously paid third-party billing companies for years. Now his office manager uses the system to bill electronically, allowing him to reduce his business expenses and add revenue.

“I am enjoying practice so much using the electronic health record that I’ve decided to delay retirement,” Dr. Amos said. “I may practice for ten more years now. My only regret is not having purchased the EHR system years before.”