



Case Study

MediNotes in Practice



Ivan Jacobs, M.D.

Advanced Eye Care of New Jersey has not created a paper chart in over two years even though we see about 3,500 new patients a year. Our records are completely legible and instantly accessible to authorized users with the click of a mouse. We have no more filing. We write prescriptions electronically. We have increased sales of our optical products by 25%. We don't use transcriptionists anymore. We are a completely paperless office and we did it by implementing MediNotes e, a sophisticated, yet easy-to-use electronic health record by MediNotes Corporation.

The entire project did involve time and capital and a commitment on the part of the physicians to use the system. However, the system was extremely easy to learn and we have been able to customize it to suit our exact workflow on an "as-we-go" basis. We have five physicians and three locations, with over 20,000 patient visits per year. Since implementing MediNotes, we have noticed phenomenal results in terms of time and cost savings as well as increased revenues.

A 20-Year Dream

In the mid-1980's, I saw an EHR system for the first time and dreamed of creating a paperless environment in my own ophthalmology practice. In 1998 I installed a system, but the inflexibility of that software and its database foundation were not functional for this practice. When I later saw a demonstration of MediNotes e, I realized it was exactly what I had been looking for. I purchased and installed the system in 2001.

MediNotes e was interfaced with Medical Manager, our practice management system. We have installed three servers with Windows 2000 for MediNotes e. A terminal server has been added to help with our digital angiography. These are all interconnected via routers and hubs and T1 lines between our main office and satellite locations.

We have experienced important, positive changes within our offices since implementing MediNotes e. Some changes were expected, and some have been pleasant surprises and welcome enhancements to our office efficiencies and processes.

Increased Sales and Savings

Since implementing the system, sales in our optical shops have increased by 25%. I attribute this to the location of our optical shop and our electronic prescription writing through MediNotes e. In each location, our optical shop is located at the entrance of the main reception area. When a patient signs out, the patient's prescription is routed directly to the optical shop, making it easier for the patient to stop there and start a conversation with our optical technician.

Prior to implementing the EHR, each physician had an assistant that transcribed everything. With MediNotes e, we were able to reduce our staff by five full-time positions. Now, either the physician or the assistant enters encounter information into the patient's chart during the exam. At the end of the visit, the physician reviews the information for accuracy, signs the note and closes the chart. No further back-end work is necessary to complete the encounter. I estimate that we are saving at least \$125,000 a year (not including benefits) on transcriptions and the salaries of five people following our physicians around writing notes. And existing staff members have better of use their time.

There is no more filing. As a result, we are saving at least \$2 per patient chart. Assuming we touched half of our patient records only once, we would be saving \$20,000. How many times do we file and refile and refile a chart? In reality, that savings alone can add up to substantial dollars every year.

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Flexible System Matches Our Style

MediNotes e is flexible and can support the method of documentation used by each physician within a practice, which has allowed all of us to continue with our own data capture methods and terminology.

I like learning about and using new technology, and I developed macros for the descriptive portions of patient visits that were previously typed or written repeatedly. But for my colleagues who were less enthusiastic about using a computer, they found the system to be as simple as selecting a phrase from a drop-down menu and clicking on that box. The proper terminology was incorporated into the patient record.

One of the key features of this system for me is that it can be as simple - or as advanced - as you want it to be. For example, we use digital angiography to capture images of the patient's eye. The fluorescein testing is done on a separate piece of medical equipment, but the images are automatically linked to the patient's record through MediNotes e. In addition to fluorescein angiographies, we scan in operative reports, surgery consents, topographies, visual fields, retina tomographs, and pathology reports. All of this information can be retrieved within the electronic patient record and accessible with the click of a mouse. We don't have to pay a staff person to search for these reports in a paper file.

The majority of our pediatric ophthalmologist's caseload involves consultations. With the electronic capture of the information, letters and reports to referring doctors can be expedited and submitted in a more efficient and timely manner. We have received compliments from referring doctors about the timeliness of our reports to them.

Easy Access to Secure Records

We no longer have any wait time for patient records. Information is accessible in real-time to multiple users simultaneously throughout our offices. From any location, authorized users can instantly view information without leaving their workstations. This is especially important to us since we have more than one location. Charts aren't moved physically from location to location anymore, previously a costly and tedious process that often resulted in physicians waiting for key information.

With HIPAA compliance an issue now, we were concerned about transfer charts and having a paper chart lying around the office. MediNotes e is certified HIPAA-compliant. And with all of our information stored in a secure, centralized electronic location, as well as a written audit trail of who has accessed a chart, we feel confident about our HIPAA compliance.

Enhanced Claims Processing

Rapid access to patient information means less days in Accounts Receivable for our practice. Our revenue is captured quickly and completely, and claims are billed on the day the patient is seen. Our normal level of A/R days outstanding for the practice is in the low 30s, compared to a national average in the high 50s.

Many insurance companies request photographic information for additional documentation before claims payment is released. Previously, charts had to be retrieved, copied and submitted to the insurance companies. With MediNotes e, the information can be retrieved and submitted electronically, resulting in less work and quicker payments.

I'll Never Go Back to Paper

Choosing MediNotes e was one of the best decisions I've ever made about my practice. We have achieved our objectives and created a truly paperless office. My dream is now a reality -- I no longer have charts stacked on my desk. I feel more in control and have a great sense of accomplishment. Colleagues and patient are astounded by how modern, efficient and smooth our operations are. Our staff and physicians are thrilled with the system, and I will never go back to paper.

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