



CASE STUDY:

EMR supports obstetrics objectives, improves standard of care

"The way MicroMD EMR helps structure clinical documentation really improves the standard of care."

*Teki Hegwood, M.D.
Hegwood Medical Group, PC*

ORGANIZATION

A single-physician obstetrics and gynecology practice in Monterey, California.

OBJECTIVE

Use information to enable remote access to patient data, reclaim office space, coordinate staff activities more efficiently, and elevate the standard of care.

SOLUTION

Deploy the integrated MicroMD® PM and MicroMD EMR solutions for practice management and electronic medical records.

RESULTS

More timely, accurate and comprehensive information that improves the standard of care; enhanced office communication and coordination of care; expanded access to patient data; streamlined prescription writing and management; improved charge capture and billing processes; a positive patient reaction.

When it comes to information technology, obstetrician Dr. Teki Hegwood is what sociologists would call an "early adopter." She intuitively grasped the potential of electronic medical record (EMR) systems—and decided not to wait.

Objective

"As an obstetrician, I work at all hours," says Hegwood, "so remote online access to the system helps me better serve my patients when I'm at home or outside the office." Even in the office, searching for paper charts can take up a lot of time. Hegwood knew that with an EMR, she and her staff could always locate the patient data they needed.

Paper consumed valuable space as well as time. "Our lack of office space was actually a major problem," says Hegwood. "We simply didn't have room to house thousands and thousands of paper files."

Solution

"In the past while working at other practices, I've found practice management systems not to be very user-friendly," explains Dr. Hegwood. "So the MicroMD systems appealed to me. Even I could schedule appointments or look things up. As a solo practitioner, I need to know the business side of my practice, so finding a system I could understand was important."



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Dr. Hegwood wanted an intuitive system, as well as an affordable, combined PM-EMR solution. So, after more than a year of evaluating systems, Dr. Hegwood chose MicroMD PM and MicroMD EMR. Her practice began using MicroMD PM in February 2007, followed by MicroMD EMR in September 2008.

Today, Dr. Hegwood uses a tablet PC to capture encounter data during patient visits, only occasionally having to take a few minutes at the end of a visit or the end of the day to complete the chart.

Contrary to what some might think, the presence of a computer is not a distraction. "Patients feel like it's high tech and it's environmentally positive because it saves paper. They're happy," says Dr. Hegwood. "Even with the few extra minutes it may take to enter some of the details, patients are very comfortable with it and they recognize that capturing data now will save time and lead to a better outcome later."

In fact, they see the impact immediately because Dr. Hegwood often posts instructions for follow-up treatments or services before the patient leaves the room. So the office staff is ready to schedule the next visit when the patient reaches the front desk on their way out.

Result

"The way MicroMD EMR helps structure clinical documentation really improves the standard of care," says Hegwood. "Information is timelier and more accurate because there's less waiting for someone to locate a chart or to get

records back from a transcriptionist. And the information is more complete. I've definitely expanded my review of systems and I'm probably more thorough taking patient histories."

MicroMD EMR makes the office more efficient as well, allowing everyone to access information and do what they need to do to take care of the patient without delay. This efficiency extends outside the office, too, a critical benefit for obstetrics. "Being able to access patient charts from home is key," says Dr. Hegwood.

The practice has also begun to use MicroMD EMR as a health maintenance tool, identifying patients due for procedures or screening, such as pap smears.

Dr. Hegwood adds that the combined MicroMD PM-MicroMD EMR solution has benefited billing, too: "We were definitely interested in better charge capture going into this, and we are more accurate because we document at the point of care. When I document an endometrial biopsy, for example, I'm automatically coding for the office visit and the procedure. Transferring charges for billing is much easier for us now, too, and the charts are always right there to answer any questions."

"Most physicians probably feel reluctant to move to an EMR because they don't feel like investing the time and money," says Hegwood. "But they'll end up doing this eventually, while I've already begun to see the benefits."



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