



Overview

Practice

Medical Clinic of North Texas,
Dallas-Ft. Worth TX area

<http://www.mcnt.com>

Practice Profile

Seventy-eight physicians across 25 locations providing a full range of primary care, pediatric and OB-GYN services.

Business Problem

Needed the flexibility in an EMR to document patient encounters effectively for different specialties.

Solution

Implemented NextGen EMR in 1999, enabling full clinical documentation and robust reporting.

Product Distinctions

- ▶ Knowledge Base Model for Family Practice
- ▶ Template builder
- ▶ Pay-for-Performance reporting
- ▶ NextMD patient portal

Benefits

- ▶ Comprehensive documentation
- ▶ Thorough reporting capabilities
- ▶ Powerful patient communications
- ▶ Improved cash flow

Flexibility is Key for Group Practices and MSOs

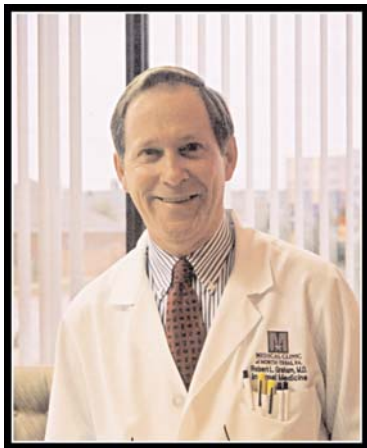
When the Medical Clinic of North Texas (MCNT) wanted to go paperless and began looking for an EMR in 1999, they realized one thing very quickly. They needed a flexible system. They needed its flexibility in their clinical documentation, in its compatibility with practice management systems, and in its reporting capabilities.

Already, the primary care clinic had 16 offices in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and consisted of 52 physicians specializing in internal medicine, family practice, obstetrics/gynecology and pediatrics. Each specialty needed to document in different ways, following their own protocols, their discipline's typical workflow, and their standard content, procedures, orders, etc.

And as they already were using a practice management system they felt at the time was sufficient, they needed a clinical system that was proven to interface seamlessly and allow robust, productive use from the combination of the systems.

As well, MCNT realized the value they would receive when discrete and extensive clinical data were extracted and reported, and they knew they would need flexible searching, filtering, formatting, and exporting to generate the reports they planned to use in a host of ways.

They knew a challenge was ahead.



Robert Graham, M.D. is one of the "Texas Super Doctors" at MCNT as named by Texas Monthly magazine. Dr. Graham practices internal medicine in the Ft. Worth facility.

Confronting the Challenge

MCNT presented this difficult challenge to Impel Management Services, a management services organization (MSO) they had formed in 1995. Impel provides information systems, accounts receivable management, accounting and other administrative functions to MCNT and serves as an application service provider in supplying information services and practice management capabilities to seven additional practices.

In addition to the flexibility they sought for MCNT in an EMR, "we were looking for a stable company that we felt would be around as long as we will," says Mike Yerrid, Impel's chief information officer.

After an extensive search, Impel and MCNT found the EMR that met their needs in NextGen® EMR from NextGen Healthcare Information Systems. They installed the system that year.

Flexibility Found

Impel found that NextGen EMR easily exchanged data with MCNT's existing practice management system, and NextGen had so much of the flexibility that MCNT wanted. "I can't use the excuse that the system doesn't do something. Ours may not be doing it today, but I have the tools to make it do it," Yerrid says. For example, he

only needed three hours to create an input template that a physician wanted for capturing patients' home blood pressure readings. "With NextGen EMR, I was able to create a solution within a day that lets us capture quantitative data, instead of just scanning images or waiting for a vendor to develop the capability for us," he says.

That flexibility also applies in terms of being able to customize NextGen EMR templates. "If you want to buy a rigid product that tells you how to practice medicine, buy something else," Yerrid says. "But if you want to tell your EMR how you want to practice medicine, NextGen is ideal."

NextGen is one of the few EMR vendors with extremely flexible templates, as well as a template builder that uses SQL server technology, with an open database architecture that allows non-programmers to build key datasets and tables and develop any type of template they would like. And NextGen's Knowledge Base Model for Primary Care is a highly comprehensive set of templates, documents, and configuration settings created with the help of providers at MCNT and other leading family physicians nationwide. The workflow within these templates mimics standard primary care workflows and incorporates additional features, such as decision support, reference checking, and diagnosis proposals, that primary care providers often use.



Impel even developed their own disease management templates before they were available from NextGen, and they were a rousing success. Overall, the templates evolved so thoroughly they allowed MCNT's providers to completely chart their encounters through the EMR. No more dictating, no more transcribing. In fact, Yerrid oversaw a complete elimination of transcription expenses with NextGen EMR. "Initially, we estimated a reduction of 50%. That alone would have paid for half of the EMR within three years," he says. "But we had a 100% reduction."

MCNT was spending \$180,000 annually for transcriptions prior to purchasing NextGen EMR. Now they spend nothing, and they have added 26 physicians since then.

Using the Data

Information gathered on PCs in each exam room flows into a single data source at Impel's central business office. To keep data traffic at a minimum and decrease phone expenses, Impel uses terminal server thin client technology with frame relay communications.

From this gathered clinical information, Impel uses NextGen EMR's extremely flexible and robust reporting features to format and evaluate critical data, and managed care plans and insurers

have noticed. "They realize they're going to be able to get HEDIS data and do their audits more easily," Yerrid says. "And this gives us excellent leverage when it comes to contracting and pay-for-performance incentives, because we have the records to prove things. We feel we practice extremely good medicine, but that's been very difficult to prove."

Yerrid also uses the reporting for other important functions. With pay-for-performance standards coming out from the ACP and the ACFP, the EMR will help identify performances in those areas and easily allow template elements to be added that will allow those points to be easily captured and documented. Many times performance standards are met but are not always documented, and therefore not recognized. Now, they always will be.

Another major reporting benefit Yerrid touts is the tremendous resource savings and patient safety advantages associated with medication recalls. At least four times in the past several years drug recalls led MCNT to the reporting feature to immediately determine patient users and generate letters to all those affected. What now takes 30 minutes used to take several people many days, with resources devoted to attempting to recall who was on the medication, check their charts, pull their contact information, send letters or call them, take return calls, answer questions, generate new prescriptions, and much more.

"If you want to tell your EMR how you want to practice medicine, NextGen is ideal."

Mike Yerrid, CIO, Impel



Several of MCNT's physicians have been named Texas Super Doctors by Texas Monthly magazine and also among the Best Doctors in Dallas by D magazine.

Patient safety and outcomes are also improved with MCNT's extensive use of NextGen EMR's health maintenance features. With the ability to place health monitor dates and triggers on any template, including the telephone communication template, users can see at a glance whether a patient is overdue for a certain test, immunization, or exam based on protocols and get them in for treatment.

Letting NextGen Handle Everything

After launching the EMR at one family practice, MCNT quickly added more sites and now has 78 physicians and 35 nurse practitioners and physician assistants using NextGen EMR at 25 separate locations.

Consequently, Yerrid wanted the advantages of one vendor for both his EMR and his practice management system. He implemented NextGen's enterprise management system (NextGen EPM) and is seeing strong returns in both time saved and better cash flow.

Claims rejection rates are vastly improved, Yerrid says, as the EPM has much more control in preventing errors of data entry, because charges come directly from the E&M coding in the EMR. He also finds the mapping to policy and group numbers very helpful.

And whereas any claims denials or delays used to take weeks to resend--having to send the request to the appropriate practice location, have them research it, send it back to the central billing office (CBO), then resending out--now, the CBO has access to patient charts right at their location and can resend the claims in mere minutes.

As for other NextGen products, Yerrid has plans to transition to NextGen ICS, the image scanning solution, and NextGen's NextMD, a secure patient-provider internet portal.

The same transition is in the works for NextMD. MCNT had 5,000 patients signed up in an earlier solution by another vendor, prior to the development of NextGen's portal. However, that vendor shut its doors while NextGen grew dramatically, developing an integrated, robust portal along the way. MCNT had even begun getting reimbursed for the e-visits performed through the initial portal, and plans to do the same with NextMD. They also were using the previous portal for appointment requests, prescription refills, billing questions, and HPI, all of which are available on NextMD and which will be reintroduced.

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