



Tallahassee Ear, Nose, and Throat A NextGen Case Study

Overview

Practice

Tallahassee Ear, Nose, and Throat
Tallahassee, Florida

<http://www.tallyent.com>

Practice Profile

An ENT practice consisting of nine physicians providing expertise in otolaryngology, head & neck surgery, and facial plastic surgery.

Business Problem

Inefficiencies and disorder from using paper medical charts.

Solution

Implemented NextGen® EMR in 1996 and completely re-organized clinical information and office processes.

Product Distinctions

- ▶ ENT Knowledge Base Model
- ▶ Lab order entry and results reporting
- ▶ Medication and allergy modules
- ▶ Patient education

Benefits

- ▶ Extensive transcription savings
- ▶ Better clinical documentation
- ▶ Ensures proper coding
- ▶ Adapts to each provider's workflow

Ten Long Years Ago, a Provider Had a Vision

It was 1995. The Web was in its infancy. You could hardly find a physician anywhere using a computer to record clinical encounters. Almost no one had heard of an electronic medical record (EMR).

But Duncan Postma, MD, founding physician of Tallahassee Ear, Nose, and Throat (TENT), was different. He was aware EMRs were just coming into their own as a solution to some of the difficult problems his practice faced.

Dr. Postma would watch his office operate and see inefficiencies he felt could be corrected. At the top of his list was the managing of patient data and the problems with paper charts. He saw these charts shuffling from place to place, getting lost, getting held too long, getting mixed up with others. In the information age, he knew this didn't have to happen.

Dr. Postma saw other businesses and industries reprocessing and reorganizing using information technology as their backbone. And because TENT had been using a practice management system for years, he knew the benefits an appropriate information system could bring.

Dr. Postma began looking at the early EMRs and vendors with the help of another EMR champion in his practice, Tricia Skinner, ARNP. One of their strategies in making the move to an EMR successful and complete was to convince the six physicians and the six audiologists in the practice of an EMR's many potential benefits. To do this, they needed to show their colleagues that they could still practice medicine the way they wanted to: with their workflow, with ENT content, and for the same number of patients.

The key would be to select a system with flexible templates for clinical documentation. This way, providers could customize documentation to fit their workflow. Templates that fully captured encounters as discrete data elements would also solve Dr. Postma's second major problem: spiraling transcription costs and delays in getting dictated notes into the chart.

Dr. Postma and Skinner feel fortunate to have found that system in NextGen® EMR from NextGen Healthcare Information Systems, Inc.



The system ended up paying for itself after only three years.

Though NextGen® EMR now offers thousands of templates across all specialties, when TENT implemented the system in 1996 there were only a few dozen templates. So Skinner set to work, along with NextGen®, developing templates, triggers, picklists, and macros that were specific to the ENT specialty. By the time she finished she had well over 100 templates completed—all this without any technological training before her career at TENT.

With templates being developed and implemented, the practice gradually documented more and more of their encounters on the system, until they were all using the system all the time. Before they knew it, costs were decreasing in many areas, such as transcription, office supplies, and coding, and, to their greatest surprise, the system ended up paying for itself after only three years.

Over the years, TENT offered many of their templates to other ENT providers, and the templates were so good that NextGen Healthcare ultimately worked very closely with Skinner when the vendor compiled their full set of ENT templates, the ENT Knowledge Base Model, for NextGen® EMR.

NextGen Healthcare had wanted to develop their own library of ENT

templates that had the look of their other knowledge bases, plus add the more general templates that ENT providers might want that weren't in Tallahassee's collection, such as pre-op and post-op workflows and other ENT procedures, such as endoscopy and laryngoscopy.

NextGen Healthcare ultimately modeled many of the templates off of what Tallahassee had used and refined for many years, especially the audiology templates, and received valuable input and guidance from Skinner.

Among the more than 100 templates NextGen Healthcare developed, 16 were specifically for audiology, and included templates for tests such as audiograms, the Dix-Hallpike Maneuver, and the Epley Maneuver, all of which can automatically be submitted to the electronic superbill.

Other audiology templates include hearing aid procedures, such as fittings, reprogramming, repairs, or settings.

Some of the other more common ENT templates in the knowledge base include ENT lab orders, audiometric procedures, patient education with common ENT disorders and procedures, somnoplasty and video stroboscopy, Botox procedures, over 20 different HPI templates, and dozens more.

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