

INTEGRATED PAIN SOLUTIONS IMPROVES DOCUMENTATION TIME BY UP TO **80%**



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—Dr. Gary Saff, MD

CHALLENGE

Replace a laborious and time-consuming process for entering documentation while improving the comprehensiveness of notes.

SOLUTION

Speech-enable the EHR by coupling Dragon Medical 10.1 with the Practice Fusion EHR to create complete, real-time patient notes.

RESULTS

Dr. Saff is now able to document exams 70 to 80 percent faster while improving note quality. Better documentation allows Dr. Saff to better demonstrate the high quality of the care he provides, which has led to more referrals. Thorough documentation has reduced claims denials, speeded payments, and given him confidence to code at the highest appropriate level. Dr. Saff no longer has to take work home with him in the evening and referring physicians are extremely pleased with the quality of the notes they receive from Integrated Pain Solutions of South Florida following a patient visit.

INTEGRATED PAIN SOLUTIONS OF SOUTH FLORIDA PAIRS DRAGON MEDICAL WITH PRACTICE FUSION EHR TO IMPROVE ASSESSMENT QUALITY

Integrated Pain Solutions of South Florida is a solo-physician practice operated by Dr. Gary Saff with locations in Ft. Lauderdale and in Sunrise. The practice specializes in interventional pain management. Prior to opening his private practice in 2009, Dr. Saff was the director of pain management services at Cleveland Clinic and a former director at Columbia University's St. Lukes-Roosevelt Hospital. Dr. Saff has published many articles and has given lectures nationally and internationally.

Integrated Pain Solutions had been using the Practice Fusion® Electronic Health Record (EHR) system since its inception and recently deployed "front-end," real-time speech recognition within the EHR to improve clinical workflow. Dr. Saff has been using Dragon® Medical 10.1 in both practice locations since May of 2011 to document patient care.

Because Dragon Medical enables Dr. Saff to instantly dictate and transmit consult notes, the practice has enhanced its reputation for providing higher quality care and being highly responsive to its referring physicians.

TIME CONSUMING DATA ENTRY WITHIN THE EHR

Prior to implementing Dragon Medical, Dr. Saff found entering necessary information into his Practice Fusion EHR laborious and time consuming. “I could use the EHR for simple, structured notes,” recalled Dr. Saff. “But not every patient fits the description in a templated note you can click on in an EHR. I’ve always tried to augment the notes from the EHR with a better description of history, exam, assessment and plan. I spent a lot of time and effort typing information into the EHR to give my notes significance and meaning.”

A demonstration of Dragon Medical by reseller MDinTouch convinced Dr. Saff that this solution would successfully enable him to avoid laborious typing and make it faster and easier to fully express his thoughts in his patient notes.

EXPERT CONSULTING FROM MDINTOUCH

MDinTouch installed and configured Dragon Medical and worked with Dr. Saff to train the solution to his voice and vocabulary, including training Dr. Saff on how-to set up templates and automated voice commands. “MDinTouch was very effective coming to the office, making sure I was comfortable with the product and making themselves available to help with troubleshooting,” noted Dr. Saff.

With Dragon Medical, my notes are always of a quality that billing people don't need to get me involved with arguing my case.

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GETTING UP TO SPEED

The training process proceeded quickly. “Training Dragon Medical for my voice was quite easy,” said Dr. Saff. I felt comfortable within the first couple of weeks and greatly relieved not to have to type notes.”

Now that he is up-to-speed, Dr. Saff notes that “Dragon Medical has lived up to my expectations. It’s very accurate in transcribing what I say. I can see a patient and quickly dictate and run to the next patient. Macros that place large, frequently-used phrases into the EHR note with a simple, two-word voice prompt instead of extensive typing or dictation also speed things up.”

IMPROVING NOTE QUALITY

The biggest benefit has been significantly better documentation. “You can only type so much,” Dr. Saff explained. “With interventional pain management, assessment can be complex. The templated histories that the EHR provides look like word salads. The information is not tied together. This reflects poorly on the quality of the practice and the care of the patient even if the practice actually provides excellent care. By dictating my assessment, I can illustrate my thought process to give more history and a better quality assessment.”

Referring physicians have taken note. “Now, when I do rounds,” said Dr. Saff, “Physicians say ‘wow, I saw your notes and I’m really impressed by what you’re doing.’ I’m not doing any more or less, but the note is more dynamic so they feel more comfortable with my care.”

FASTER INPUT

Previously, Dr. Saff typed his extended evaluations, a less than optimal process. As Dr. Saff explained, “I used to get writer’s cramp and bleary eyes. Dragon Medical makes it much easier to enter information into my electronic record. It reduces the time it takes me to input patient information by 70 to 80 percent.”

MORE REFERRALS

Better quality notes have translated into more patient referrals for Dr. Saff. “Because a higher quality note reflects better on the practice, other physicians are more likely to refer me,” said Dr. Saff.

Dr. Saff also performs independent medical exams and chart reviews for lawyers and judges for legal cases. Better quality notes have increased referrals for this business as well.

As Dr. Saff explains, “In a legal case, quality medical documentation is paramount. A lot of lawyers and judges ask me to see their patients because they know my notes have more validity. Using Dragon Medical, I can dictate my chart reviews without typing to put together a more comprehensive assessment. I’m better able to convey the nuances and complexities of a chart review or independent medical exam. To put that same effort into a typewritten note would be exhausting and impossible to do time-wise.”

BETTER PATIENT CARE

Every doctor tries to provide the best patient care, but using a dictated note to augment the template allows Dr. Saff to improve quality of care. Explained the doctor, “I can put more into my notes so when the patient comes in for a follow up. I can more easily remember what I was thinking.”

FASTER PAYMENTS

Improved documentation also helps Dr. Saff get reimbursed more quickly by insurance companies. “In other practices I’ve worked with where we only used templates, physician were often called in and asked, ‘Why did you bill this? What were the indications to justify the diagnosis and treatment?’” explained Dr. Saff.

“Dictation makes it easier to medically justify things. With Dragon Medical, my notes are always of a quality that billing people don’t need to get me involved with arguing my case. Better documentation has also resulted in fewer denials and quicker reimbursement. And when I use higher billing codes, they’re justified because I describe the complexity of the case.”

BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance has improved. While Dr. Saff has always gone home by 5:30 p.m. several times a week to join the family for dinner, previously he needed to complete his documentation after dinner. “Now it’s all done in the office. Dragon Medical saves me 5-6 hours a week,” said Dr. Saff.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, says Dr. Saff, “If you believe that using an EHR is the way to go, Dragon Medical frosts the cake in terms of making information usable to other physicians. The bulk of the EHR note should be created through existing EHR templates or Dragon macros, but Dragon Medical lets you add color and nuance that we all require as physicians. Dragon Medical allows me to provide an elevated level of medical excellence.”

HIGHLIGHTS

- One physician currently uses Dragon Medical in two locations
- Rather than producing canned notes, Dragon Medical allows the physician to create thorough documentation unique to each patient encounter, in his own words
- Dragon Medical reduced the time it takes the physician to enter information by 70 to 80 percent, saving 5-6 hours a week
- Better quality notes have led to increased referrals from physicians as well as from lawyers and judges who use Dr. Saff for independent medical exams and chart reviews for lawsuits and trials
- Higher quality notes lead to quicker reimbursement from insurance companies and fewer claims denials
- Comprehensive notes lead to confidence in coding at the maximum appropriate level
- The physician no longer takes work home with him, saving 5-6 hours per week
- Referring physicians are extremely pleased with the quality of the notes they receive