Healthy EHR core and prenatal solution improve efficiency

The Iowa Clinic (West Des Moines, Iowa) has used TouchWorks EHR since 2007 to manage its growing multi-specialty practice, and uses Allscripts Prenatal for quality obstetric and gynecological care. The solution’s capabilities help the organization become more efficient and successfully participate in incentive and quality programs, such as Meaningful Use and Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH).

Experience

The Iowa Clinic is the largest physician-owned, multi-specialty group in Central Iowa. The organization partners with local medical centers and hospitals to serve a population of 1.1 million people through 40 different specialties. Committed to healing patients with compassion, the physicians and staff seek to provide continuously improving health care.

In 2007, the physician leadership board determined it was time to move from a paper-based record system to an electronic health record (EHR). “We were growing then, and we are growing at an even faster pace now,” Software Manager Marilyn Backus said. “EHRs replace all that paper clutter and eliminate the problems with lost charts. The space for chart storage becomes available for exam rooms and offices.”

Solutions

After a careful consideration process, the team selected TouchWorks EHR and over the course of several months brought the solution live with one specialty at a time.

“We’re much more efficient with TouchWorks EHR,” Backus said. “We can pull data for things like Meaningful Use in a much more timely way, and it’s a huge advantage for physicians to be able to verify results and message back and forth with staff.”

MEETING SPECIFIC NEEDS OF OBSTETRIC AND GYNECOLOGICAL CARE WITH ALLSCRIPTS PRENATAL

In 2008, shortly after bringing TouchWorks EHR to its specialties, The Iowa Clinic was an early adopter for Prenatal, the first stand-alone and EHR-integrated Software as a Service (SaaS) solution to address the unique workflow and cross-provider information sharing needs of prenatal care.

Much of the record keeping revolved around the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)’s paper Antepartum form. “Our OB/GYN specialty was insistent that they couldn’t go live without an electronic version of the ACOG form,” Backus recalled. The Iowa Clinic tried to create one, but the size of the document made it difficult to use electronically.

CLIENT PROFILE:
- Multi-specialty, physician-owned clinic
- 400,000 patient visits annually
- 185 providers
- 40 specialties
- OB/GYN specialty has 9 physicians, 3 mid-level providers

SOLUTIONS:
- Allscripts TouchWorks® EHR
- Allscripts Prenatal™
- Allscripts FollowMyHealth®

“Allscripts does a great job staying on top of what the government will require next...I don’t know how we’d meet our goals without TouchWorks EHR.”

Marilyn Backus
Software Manager
“When our physicians saw Allscripts Prenatal, they wanted it yesterday,” Backus said. “It’s so easy to use, it didn’t require training…I know that sounds crazy, but it’s just a great software package that works very well.”

Backus notes that one of the best features is its availability as a cloud-based solution. In the clinic or at the hospital, physicians can view and print information about the patients.

“Allscripts Prenatal is solid, works well, and it just keeps getting better,” Backus said.

ENGAGING PATIENTS WITH FOLLOWMYHEALTH

As part of its efforts to improve quality, The Iowa Clinic is actively working to involve patients in their own care. In January 2014, it launched the FollowMyHealth patient engagement solution. The organization used a variety of methods to encourage patients to enroll, including having people dedicated to answering questions in waiting rooms, or rewards for patients who participate in the secure messaging.

“We average more than 400 new patients signing up every week,” Backus said. The Iowa Clinic has enrolled more than 30,000 patients in its first 20 months of going live.

Outcomes

Backus credits TouchWorks EHR with enabling The Iowa Clinic to participate in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) Meaningful Use incentive funding program. “With Allscripts, we’ve been able to meet Meaningful Use requirements every year that it’s been available, since 2011,” she said. “We’ve earned $4,286,437 in incentive funding to date.”

IMPROVING QUALITY AND ACHIEVING PCMH

The Iowa Clinic is among just a handful of primary care providers in the state to achieve the highest, Level-Three PCMH certification from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). A PCMH provides comprehensive care for patients, and requires the right technology, tools and commitment to help patients improve their health.

“I want to provide the best possible care to my patients, but that can be challenging when someone receives treatment in multiple locations with multiple providers,” says Christina Taylor, M.D., an Internal Medicine physician with The Iowa Clinic. “A Medical Home has the people, processes and record keeping in place that make it possible for me to get a more holistic view of a patient’s health. A good [EHR] and Medical Home better equip me to care for my patients.”

Backus reports that the PCMH certification process helped The Iowa Clinic develop care coordination efforts, such as patient care teams. “We wouldn’t have gotten this certification without the aid of Analytics and CQS to pull the necessary data to be submitted,” she said.

WHAT’S NEXT FOR THE IOWA CLINIC?

As the organization continues to grow, The Iowa Clinic will continue to keep pace with evolving quality requirements with Allscripts. “Allscripts does a great job staying on top of what the government will require next,” Backus said. “I don’t know how we’d meet our goals without TouchWorks EHR.”

OUTCOMES:

• Successfully attested to Meaningful Use Stage 1 for four years, earning $4,286,437 in incentive funding
• Achieved the highest Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) certification, Level 3
• Enrolled 30,000 patients in its FollowMyHealth patient portal in its first 20 months

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