

Electronic Medical Record Success Story

PHYSICIANS
ADOPTING
COMPUTER
TECHNOLOGY
(PACT)

Armand Gonzalzes, MD, FAAP

Riverpoint Pediatrics

Chicago, Illinois

2004 HIMSS Nicholas E. Davies Award of Excellence Winner/Primary Care*

About Dr. Gonzalzes and Physicians Adopting Computer Technology (PACT)

At the PACT conferences, Dr. Gonzalzes presents his approach to implementing the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) in his solo pediatric practice, Riverpoint Pediatrics in Chicago, Illinois. With the EMR in place, his practice grew and revenue increased. Attendees at PACT will have the opportunity to hear how Dr. Gonzalzes reaped the benefits of the EMR in his practice with a reasonable investment strategy and streamlined office design.

About Riverpoint Pediatrics & Dr. Armand Gonzalzes

Dr. Gonzalzes introduced an electronic medical record (EMR) in 2000 — an innovation that changed his outlook on pediatric practice. The EMR made it possible for his solo practice to evolve through an era of managed care, shrinking reimbursements and smaller patient volumes. Now, he sees new patients every week with the EMR allowing him to spend more time with those patients and less time on paperwork.

IN BRIEF

Challenge

To improve efficiencies and increase the quality of patient care by spending more time with patients and less time documenting and locating charts.

Solution

Purchase and implement an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) to interface with the current practice management system at Dr. Gonzalzes' pediatrics practice.

Benefits

A time savings of more than 30 minutes for patients (from check-in to check-out), a time savings of between 20 to 50 minutes for charting, a 9600% decrease in drug-refill times, and a significant increase in patient referrals.

The Technology Challenge

Dr. Armand Gonzalzes first introduced new technology into his practice in 1981 with a computer-based practice management system. However, Dr. Gonzalzes described the system he used as “clunky” with its key-punch cards that would stick in the machine. In 1985, he looked into a more extensive EMR, but decided against the investment because the technology was simply not user-friendly enough. In 1990, Dr. Gonzalzes joined a multi-practice group at an Illinois hospital. When the group began specializing in pediatrics in 1999, Dr. Gonzalzes decided to leave and open his own practice – Riverpoint Pediatrics – in the Lakeview area of Chicago.

The EMR Solution

For Dr. Gonzalzes, EMR provided a solution with multiple rewards. First, the new system enabled him to streamline his entire operation, benefiting both his patients and the practice itself. Riverpoint Pediatrics saw a significant growth in revenue from the increased efficiencies in coding, charting and refilling prescriptions. Automated billing and a clearinghouse for claims also led to faster reimbursements and more efficient operations. New time savings from the EMR allowed for shorter wait times among current patients, which led to more referrals and new patients coming in each week.

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*The Davies Award program was originally created by CPRI-HOST in 1995. The program honors Dr. Nicholas Davies, an Atlanta-based physician who was committed to improving patient care through the use of health information technology. CPRI-HOST merged with HIMSS in 2002; HIMSS now manages the program.

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In a survey conducted after the debut of the new EMR, patients responded favorably to the new method of care, citing the security of the password-protected sign-in and the immediacy of records retrieval.

EMR Benefits and Value

“The wasteful and time-consuming practices of a small business have been eliminated or streamlined,” said Dr. Gonzalzes. “The ability of the electronic medical record to integrate physician and staff workflow has made the staff’s lives easier and the business more efficient and profitable.”

ROI - RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- **77.5% growth in revenue in 4 years**
EMR implementation resulted in better coding and charge capture, a faster reimbursement rate, increased patient referrals due to better service, and computer-system payoffs
- **NO denied claims**
All claims have been accepted by working with a clearinghouse to review claims at \$.35/each before submitting for payment
- **New patients every week**
This solo practice physician now sees 6,000 patients with new patients coming in every week
- **Payments received in two weeks**
Automated billing/payment systems have helped to streamline these processes
- **30-minute office visits from check-in to check-out**
Patient visits have been reduced by 50% from one hour or more to 30 minutes
- **Drug-refill time at 15 minutes or less**
Refills used to require 24 hours
- **Charting time at 10 minutes**
Without the EMR, charting took between 30 to 60 minutes per patient



“Technology has improved my practice by allowing me more time with my patients, an advantage that they recognize as well. It is an investment, but one well worth the time, money and redesign of the practice operation. When I speak to my colleagues, I encourage them to take this step into technology for their practices. Each operation has unique challenges, but overall, we all have the same objective: to spend more time with patients and less on office administration, while also improving revenue. The electronic medical record has accomplished that for me.”

Armand Gonzalzes, MD, FAAP

For more information,
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