SAN DIEGO HEART & VASCULAR ASSOCIATES COUPLES DRAGON MEDICAL PRACTICE EDITION WITH ALLSCRIPTS ENTERPRISE EHR TO IMPROVE LEVEL OF SERVICE, ENHANCE DOCUMENTATION QUALITY, AND REDUCE COSTS

"We took the opportunity to implement Dragon Medical Practice Edition at this time because we'd heard that its quality was at the necessary level. I wasn't disappointed."

—Paul Phillips, MD, Cardiologist
San Diego Heart & Vascular Associates
San Diego, CA

CHALLENGE

- Take advantage of CMS incentives for EHR adoption, eliminate $20,000 annually in transcription costs, all while creating comprehensive patient documentation

SOLUTION

- Speech-enable the EHR by coupling Dragon Medical Practice Edition with Allscripts Enterprise EHR to create complete, real-time patient notes

RESULTS

- Dragon Medical Practice Edition within Allscripts Enterprise is now used by seven physicians to create high quality documentation unique to each patient encounter. Significant annual cost savings include $20,000 of transcription expenses. Turnaround time for documentation has been reduced from one week to one hour, which helps improve accuracy and allows the practice to better communicate with patients and to more easily share information with other physicians who may be treating the patient.

SUMMARY

Caring for patients since 1987, San Diego Heart & Vascular Associates is one of the largest cardiology practices in San Diego with locations in Hillcrest and Coronado and privileges at five hospitals. Physicians are ABIM board-certified in invasive and non-invasive cardiovascular medicine and have been recognized for excellence in medical teaching and patient satisfaction. The practice has been repeatedly cited as members of "San Diego Magazine Top Doctors," and "America's Top Physicians." Physicians in the practice have published more than 30 research articles, two books, and have created a statin website.

The practice has recently deployed "front-end," real-time speech recognition with the Allscripts® Enterprise Electronic Health Record (EHR) to improve clinical workflow. The practice has significantly reduced costs, improved documentation quality for its EHR system, and cut turnaround time for notes, referral letters and patient handouts. Currently, seven out of the practice's eight physicians are using Dragon® Medical Practice Edition to complete their documentation within Allscripts Enterprise EHR.

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ENHANCING POINT-AND-CLICK EHR DOCUMENTATION

The physicians at San Diego Heart & Vascular had long employed transcriptionists to create documentation, patient handouts and referral letters. Recently, the practice adopted the Allscripts Enterprise EHR in an effort to participate in the EHR reimbursement program available through the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as specified by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH).

As the practice prepared its move to the EHR, it was aware that the EHR's "point and click" templates would limit the physicians' ability to enter relevant information into the patient's record. Since few physicians wish to type lengthy notes into an EHR, the practice would have needed to continue its use of the costly transcription service.

Additionally, the process of transcribing notes and integrating them into the EHR was cumbersome and complex. As Paul Phillips, MD, Cardiologist, recalled, "We would have to dictate notes, send them out for transcription, and have the transcribed notes emailed back. The physician would then have to proofread the notes and send them to a technician to locate the right place to enter them into the EHR."

THE SOLUTION: SPEECH RECOGNITION

The physicians determined that speech-enabling the Allscripts Enterprise EHR with Dragon Medical Practice Edition provided an optimal solution. (Today, over 25,000 physicians across the U.S. use Dragon Medical Practice Edition to document care into Allscripts EHR solutions, including Enterprise.) Dragon Medical Practice Edition coupled with Allscripts Enterprise EHR promised to provide the physicians a way to create complete, comprehensive, real-time patient notes.

EXPERT CONSULTING

The practice decided to implement Dragon Medical Practice Edition three months before installing Allscripts Enterprise EHR to give its clinicians time to get comfortable with speech recognition before turning their attention to the EHR. The implementation of Dragon Medical Practice Edition was overseen by one of Nuance's value-added resellers. He trained the physicians on how to install and use the system as well as how to set up templates and macros. CHMB of Escondido, California implemented the Allscripts Enterprise EHR.

"At first, the reseller came in for 30-40 minutes to show me the basics," said Dr. Phillips. "After that, he told me to play with the system for five or six patients to determine what I needed help with, and then he came back to answer my questions. The training was superb. Our trainer was always available, and I had a really good experience." Once Allscripts Enterprise EHR was up and running, he returned to make sure the combined Dragon/EHR infrastructure worked well together.

EXPECTING GREAT THINGS; LIVING UP TO EXPECTATIONS

The practice went into the Dragon Medical Practice Edition implementation with high expectations. "We took the opportunity to implement Dragon Medical Practice Edition at this time because we'd heard that its quality was at the necessary level," said Dr. Phillips. "I wasn't disappointed."

Dr. Phillips got up to speed on Dragon Medical Practice Edition by first dictating only new patients, then all patients. By the time the EHR was in place, he was ready to use Dragon Medical Practice Edition to enter any notes he wanted to into the EHR. He's been pleased with the results. Said Dr. Phillips, "I can talk at a regular pace. It's amazingly accurate for physical exams, which require shorter notes. I tend

to be pretty expansive with free text. In that area, I'm still training Dragon and it's still training me."

STRONG INTEGRATION WITH THE EHR SPEEDS DATA ENTRY

Using Dragon Medical Practice Edition with Allscripts Enterprise has eliminated limitations imposed by the EHR's point and click interface and "canned" notes. "I'm not much of a point and click person, I'd rather say things," explained Dr. Phillips. "I want to describe what the patient tells me the way they say it. I also like to emphasize findings that my experience tells me are important, not what the EHR tells me I should focus on. As a result, whenever Allscripts gives me the option to do free form notes, I take it. Without Dragon Medical Practice Edition, that would slow me down."

Dragon Medical Practice Edition templates further speed data entry. For example, the doctor does several stress tests, including standard exercise tests and exercise nuclear tests. Previously, he'd have to dictate all the text to describe his results. Templates enable him to simply state the numerical test results. "That makes it really fast," said Dr. Phillips.

Overall, the integration between Dragon Medical Practice Edition and Enterprise is excellent. "The integration is better than promised," said Dr. Phillips. "Wherever I go in the program, I can dictate."

IMPROVING QUALITY OF NOTES WITHIN THE EHR

As a result of using Dragon Medical Practice Edition, documentation quality within the EHR remains high. "It's easier to say things. Without Dragon Medical Practice Edition, my documentation would be much less personalized and recommendations would be minimal," said Dr. Phillips. The system also minimizes errors. Previously, if the transcriptionist didn't understand something in a physician's dictation, they'd leave it blank.

Then when the note came back several days later, the doctor would have to remember what they said. If Dragon Medical Practice Edition makes a mistake, the physician knows what they just said and can correct the notes on-the-spot – ensuring the note is complete and done the first time.

FASTER TURNAROUND ENHANCES PATIENT CARE

Using Dragon Medical Practice Edition has compressed the transcription process from one week to near real-time. Real-time turnaround means that physicians can enter information into the EHR as well as send notes or letters to referring physicians and to patients instantly. Said Dr. Phillips. "For patients, timely transcription improves understanding and communication. Because patients can take assessment reports home with them, they get the message more clearly about what they need to do. Rapid transcription also helps improve service to other physicians. For example, if the patient needs semi-urgent surgery, it's much easier for me to make sure the documentation is ready for the anesthesiologist and the surgeon."

LOWER TRANSCRIPTION COSTS

Costs are lower as well. Dragon Medical Practice Edition has eliminated $20,000 a year in transcription costs.

CONCLUSION

Overall, Dragon Medical Practice Edition has exceeded the practice's expectations. "I would absolutely recommend it to other physicians," said Dr. Phillips.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 physicians currently use Dragon Medical Practice Edition with Allscripts Enterprise EHR
- $20,000 in annual transcription expenses have been eliminated
- Rather than producing canned notes, Dragon Medical Practice Edition lets physicians create thorough documentation unique to each patient encounter
- Turnaround time for documentation has been reduced from one week to one hour
- Physicians improve communication with patients and with other doctors

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