

Piedmont Plastic Surgery and Dermatology Transitions From Paper to EMA Plastic Surgery™ and EMA Dermatology™



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Gregory M. Swank, MD, FACS

Key Benefits of EMA™:

- Specialty-specific electronic medical records (EMR) system
- Thorough documentation improves efficiency
- Convenience of the cloud increases productivity
- Proper data collection achieves Meaningful Use attestation

Background

Leadership at Piedmont Plastic Surgery and Dermatology, located in Gastonia, N.C., decided it was time to transition from paper charts to an EMR system. With six locations, 21 physicians and over 100 staffers, this group was concerned that this would not be an easy feat. Storage of paper charts was becoming an issue given the size of the practice and they wanted the improved efficiency that an EMR system facilitates. Also, with ICD-10 and Meaningful Use approaching, the providers felt it was time to begin the process of evaluating systems.

After researching numerous EMR systems over a two year period, a fellow colleague suggested Modernizing Medicine’s Electronic Medical Assistant® (EMA). Dr. Gregory Swank, a plastic surgeon at the practice, explains, “We quickly found that EMA is one of the most popular EMR programs available, so we decided to explore it further. We were looking specifically for ease of use, along with a system that even less tech savvy people would be able to grasp and start using fairly quickly.”

In January 2013, Piedmont Plastic Surgery and Dermatology implemented both EMA Plastic Surgery

and EMA Dermatology. “Because it is such a large practice, we started off with only a few physicians implementing EMA at a particular time; however, all 21 physicians were trained and completely using EMA within a six-month period,” Dr. Swank explained. “I was very impressed with the success of our smooth transition from paper. The learning curve was very easy and we were 100 percent electronic within a few months time.”



“EMA Dermatology follows the flow of a real clinic, not a textbook clinic.”

William L. Fangman, MD

Intuitive and Specialty-Specific

EMA was designed by physicians to include in-depth medical knowledge and comprehend an individual’s specific workflow. Dr. William Fangman, a dermatologist at the practice, said, “You can tell that clinical physicians were involved in the development of EMA Dermatology and that makes it functional in an actual office. Many EMR systems allow you to document a physical exam; however, patients don’t always follow a specific order of events. EMA Dermatology allows you to add, delete and change your documentation without following a strict linear progression to an office visit. EMA Dermatology follows the flow of a real clinic, not a textbook clinic.”

Detailed Documentation Improves Efficiency

Physicians appreciate EMA's efficiency and time-saving capabilities. "EMA Plastic Surgery creates a more complete note and record of the patient visit in the same amount of time or less than paper and is so easy to use. When using paper, it would be a short three-line note, but with EMA Plastic Surgery, my notes are detailed with attachments, pathologies, photos, etc. Anything I need is at my fingertips," Dr. Swank said. "After going live with EMA Plastic Surgery, we were able to keep the same number of patients. The transition has not effected productivity at all in a negative way; it actually has increased productivity."

Dr. Fangman also explains, "I hoped that EMA Dermatology would improve my efficiency in clinic and still allow me to provide great patient care and documentation. It has been successful. I use EMA Dermatology in the clinical exam room with my medical assistants as scribes, and when I leave the room, my notes are essentially complete. I also think it is important that an EMR system allows you to effectively and efficiently make notes that are specific to the patient without using templates. EMA Dermatology's 'additional notes' section is an excellent way for me to quickly add additional data to a note that makes it very specific to the patient."

Cloud-based

EMA is cloud-based allowing the physicians at Piedmont Plastic Surgery and Dermatology to access patient records securely from virtually anywhere. "We have several office locations, so if a patient transfers to another office, their paper chart would have to be couriered to another location," Dr. Swank said. "As a cloud-based system, EMA is seamless. All of our providers in all of our different locations have access to the patient's chart."

"Not only do I love the fact that we have a very well-generated and complete note of each and every visit, but that note can also be accessed from virtually anywhere. I can access a patient chart from any of our sites and on the weekends. When I cover for my partners, I'm able to

pull up the patient chart from my iPad, iPhone or desktop at home, that has made coverage between physicians very easy for us," Dr. Swank said. "I use PocketEMA™ on my iPhone and it's super convenient. If I am out of the office and I receive a call, I can pull up a complete patient record anytime, no matter where I am located. The convenience is tremendous."

EMA Makes Coding and Compliance Easy

EMA's collection of data and effortless coding allows the physicians to focus on their patients rather than government stipulations. "I think the billing features in EMA are very accurate and reliable. I review the codes that are generated and they are spot on," Dr. Swank said.

"I love the fact that EMA shows you the E&M CPT code selection, what factors you've met and provides you with your data points on medical decision making. EMA basically tells you why the code was generated and definitely adds assurance to my billing. I'm confident that the ICD-10 codes that are prebuilt into EMA will be just as reliable as what we've experienced with ICD-9."

"We have also received government incentives with the help of EMA by attesting for Stage One Meaningful Use. EMA does the work for you. It collects all of the data needed to meet the parameters for attesting and we were able to track our progress along the way."

The Backing of Modernizing Medicine

"The physicians and support team at Modernizing Medicine are fantastic. I love the fact that they are so responsive to our needs as a practice. If we have an issue, we let them know, and the Modernizing Medicine staff does their very best to resolve it quickly," Dr. Fangman said.

"Modernizing Medicine stays up to date with changes in our specialties of dermatology and plastic surgery. Moving towards the future with Modernizing Medicine, I only see EMA improving and evolving as time goes on. EMA Plastic Surgery and EMA Dermatology have been great solutions for us."

