

# Dermatology Associates of Napa Valley increases revenues and improves patient care with EMA™



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*Robert Davis, MD*

## Key Benefits:

- Increased revenues while working less
- Successfully attested for Meaningful Use
- Cloud-based, mobile access saves time
- Use of iPad improves patient care
- Pathology reports turned around 50% faster
- Biopsy results available within 24 hours

When Dr. Robert Davis of Dermatology Associates of Napa Valley decided to bring a younger partner into his longtime practice in 2012, he knew that he wanted to implement an electronic medical record (EMR) system. “Although I’m in the later years of my practice,” said Dr. Davis, “I knew that electronic records were the way of the future. I felt that we would greatly benefit from implementing one.”

Dr. Davis looked at many different EMR systems, and after doing extensive research, chose to implement EMA Dermatology™. “The main reason I chose EMA was because it seemed to be very easy-to-use, which wasn’t the case with the other systems I had seen,” he said. “I liked that it was dermatology-specific, and felt that the price was fair and reasonable. My office staff is young and tech-savvy, and I felt it would be a great fit for my practice.”

## Up-and-running quickly

The practice implemented EMA Dermatology in April, 2012, and was up-and-running on the system quickly. “Our whole staff did the Web-based training, and it was very valuable,” he noted. “If I ever had a question, I’d pick up the phone and call Modernizing Medicine. They were always available to help me. When you’re new, it’s great to have that personal help, someone to tell you what to do.”

“Initially, I had a bit of a learning curve on the system,” he continued. “During the first three months, I was learning the basics and was a little bit slower. By six months, I had gotten really fast on the system. I see about 40 patients per day, so maintaining my level of productivity was crucial for me.”

## Increased revenues, reduced work hours

“Since implementing EMA, my office is much more efficient than it’s ever been,” said Dr. Davis. “I used to have paper charts piled up everywhere, waiting for something to be done with them. That doesn’t happen now. And due to EMA’s more accurate coding, we’re also billing higher. In the past, I would just code out a skin biopsy. But the system is more specific and

captures where the biopsy was, for example, ear, lip, or eye, which results in significantly higher reimbursement. In the past, I also probably forgot to code different procedures, especially if I did multiple procedures on a patient.”

“Due to EMA’s increased efficiency and more accurate coding, I’ve been able to reduce my work schedule from 4½ days to 3 days a week, while increasing my revenues,” he said.

### **Easily earned Meaningful Use**

“My partner and I successfully attested for Meaningful Use last year, and we couldn’t have done it without EMA,” noted Dr. Davis. “The system tracked everything for us; we just clicked on a little icon to see how we were doing against the requirements. We checked it regularly and were able to course-correct early on. Within a few weeks, we went from meeting 60 percent of the requirements to meeting 90 percent. Ultimately, when we attested, we got the maximum payout of \$36,000.”

### **Mobile access saves time**

Dr. Davis enjoys greater mobility with EMA. “I like the flexibility that the cloud-based system gives me,” he said. “If I’m away at a conference or a meeting, I can log into the system on a break and refill a few prescriptions or process reports on the spot. I also used to bring home a lot of paperwork at night, but now I never do. I can check a patient’s chart from my iPad at home, and send intramail messages through the system to my nurses if I need to. It’s been a huge timesaver.”

### **Improving patient care**

“I feel that EMA has helped me to improve my patient care,” continued Dr. Davis. “By using EMA and the iPad, I can keep direct eye contact with my patients and be hands-on with them. I’m not distracted by entering data in a laptop in the exam room, as I’ve seen with other physicians. The system is totally mobile and wireless, and I love not having to be confined to sitting at a desk.”

“The system also reminds me to ask all of the right questions and to capture more information in the record than I would with a paper chart,” he observed. “It’s pretty hard to overlook anything now. My handwriting is terrible, and the system has created more accurate documentation. Our pathology reports all come in electronically too, and we’ve reduced the turnaround time for them from a week to 2-4 days. Biopsy results are electronically downloaded within 24 hours, I record the results immediately into the chart and we notify the patient. This has definitely improved our patient care.”

### **Words of advice**

Looking back on over a year of experience with EMA, Dr. Davis reflected on the lessons learned so far. “Like anything new, there’s a learning curve,” he advised. “Take the time to train properly, and have your staff trained. Go into it with an open mind, and make it a fun learning experience for the team. It’ll pay off; training on and working with EMA together has built greater camaraderie among the team. For so many reasons, implementing EMA has definitely been one of the best things I’ve ever done for my practice.”



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