

Dermatology Associates of Concord Switches to EMA™ and Increases Efficiency



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Eileen Deignan, MD

Key Benefits:

- Increased volume
- Improved patient experience during exam
- Cloud-based access improves patient care
- Simple process to attain Meaningful Use

When Dr. Eileen Deignan at Dermatology Associates of Concord searched for an electronic medical record (EMR) system, she knew that she wanted one that was designed specifically for dermatologists. “A lot of the EMRs we saw were built for primary care,” said Dr. Deignan. “They had a lot of information on the screen that wasn’t relevant for our practice. We implemented a dermatology-specific EMR in 2010, but found it difficult to use and navigate.”

In early 2011, Dr. Deignan discovered EMA Dermatology™. “EMA was like a night-and-day comparison to our previous EMR,” noted Dr. Deignan. “It was really obvious that a dermatologist created it. It was designed to follow the flow of a dermatology visit, which isn’t necessarily linear. It’s really easy to flow back and forth on EMA to different elements of a visit, which definitely wasn’t the case with other EMRs. It was an easy decision to make the switch to EMA.”

Greater Charting Efficiency Yields Greater Business Efficiency

“Since moving to EMA in 2011, our practice has been very happy,” said Dr. Deignan. “The way we were charting before was laborious and the charts were difficult to read. Now, EMA enables us to make notes that are easier to write and to read. We’re much more efficient in our charting, and more efficient in our business. All of that has meant happier doctors and happier staff.”

Increased Volume

“For the first two years of using EMA, I did all of my notes myself,” said Dr. Deignan. “But beginning in June 2013, our practice decided to add more medical assistants and assign each doctor a medical assistant who also acts as a scribe. Since moving to this model, I’ve increased my volume. Previously I was often seeing 25-28 patients a day, now I routinely see 30-32. It’s been a great change for me. I feel much less stressed, and enjoy the fact that I don’t have to perform the routine tasks that an MA can do.”

“Most important, with this model, I can focus more on the patient during the exam versus staring at a computer

screen,” noted Dr. Deignan. “During the exam, I describe what I see and am doing, and the MA scribes it in the patient’s chart in EMA via an iPad or laptop computer. I maintain eye contact with the patient and feel that it definitely improves the patient’s experience.”

“When we considered moving to the model of a dedicated MA/scribe, we crunched the numbers to see how much it would cost,” said Dr. Deignan. “We found that we would each only need to see three more patients per week to cover the cost of additional staff. It’s been more than worthwhile.”

Cloud-based Access Improves Patient Care

“Having a cloud-based EMR system helps me provide better patient care,” observed Dr. Deignan. “For example, when I’m on call and covering for one of my partners, I can pull up a patient’s record from wherever I am and see the whole picture. I can say, ‘I see that you saw Dr. Bowers yesterday,’ or ‘I see that you have a lesion on your right forearm,’ because all of the information is right in front of me. Patients like the personal attention and I like it too. It’s also useful because we have two practice locations, and in the past I had to have someone fax me the notes from the other location. The system saves a lot of faxing, and of course, we don’t have to search for charts anymore.”

Meaningful Use Easily Underway

“We’re in the process of attesting for Meaningful Use with EMA,” said Dr. Deignan. “We’ll hit the button shortly and have our three months’ worth of data for 2013. My staff really made it happen; they watched the Modernizing Medicine webinars and took care of the

process. As a physician, it was a non-event for me. It was all transparent and there wasn’t anything special that I needed to do.”

Grand Rounds and VisualDx Are Useful

“EMA has evolved with some great new features since we first implemented it,” noted Dr. Deignan. “The Grand Rounds feature has been useful when I’ve been stumped with a difficult case and my usual treatments haven’t worked. I hit ‘Grand Rounds’ and it gives me additional ideas for therapeutic options.”

“Having the integrated VisualDx feature is valuable as well,” continued Dr. Deignan. “I use it to show patients photos of someone who has the same condition that they do, which is reassuring to them. It’s also very helpful to show them photos of a condition that they may have had but that has had a good outcome.”

Lessons Learned

Reflecting upon her experience, Dr. Deignan shares her ‘lessons learned’ about implementing EMA. “If we had to do it again, it would have been a lot easier if all of our doctors in the practice had gotten on board and moved onto EMA together,” said Dr. Deignan. “Instead, only some of the physicians started using EMA first. It was a piecemeal way to go about it and was a bit of a challenge for the staff. I would suggest doing whole group planning, figuring out what you need and doing it all at once. The practice should also put time and thought into choosing the right EMR, because it can be expensive to adopt one and then change it. We learned that lesson, but since switching to EMA, we haven’t looked back.”



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