

# American Medical Association

**Advancing The Quality Agenda  
Physician Performance Measures  
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# Improving Physician Performance

by

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# Yesterday

- **Southeast Texas Medical Associates, LLP (SETMA) was formed in 1995 by the merging of Four independent, solo practices of Family Physicians and Internists**
  - Two practices transcribed medical records and two had hand-written medical records
  - Three practices organized records alphabetically and one numerically
  - One practice used an antiquated computer management system; the other three used peg board

# Problem

After two years, it was apparent that the complexities of a multiple specialty practice were beyond a paper-based system and the practice management computer system we had inherited from one of our partners.



# Additional Complications

1. Four providers had grown to eight (currently 34)
2. Additional services had been added:
  - a. A level-two, moderately-complex reference laboratory had been added to the practice
  - b. Physical therapy had been added
  - c. A Medicare + Choice home health agency had been added
  - d. A Hospice had been added



# Complications Cont'd

3. A large hospital practice added complexity to continuity of care and to data-base access simultaneously at multiple locations
4. A large long-term residential-care practice added new challenges for transition of care between out-patient, in-patient, nursing home, etc

# Complications continued

5. The nature of our practice made management of medications, telephone access and provider-to-provider communications critical
6. Involvement with emerging managed care both from a provider standpoint and as Medical Director of a 450 physician IPA demanded electronic management of data

# The Straw and the Camel

- 7. SETMA began to manage the majority of emergency care in a community of 130,000.
- The desire and need to improve quality of care in a measurable way, which could be proved, dictated change.

# Solution

In March of 1998, SETMA, purchased a robust electronic medical record and enterprise practice management applications from a national vendor.

# Today

SETMA is a growing multi-specialty clinic with 34 providers including:

- Nurse Practitioners
- Internal Medicine
- Family Practice
- Pediatrics
- Pulmonology
- Critical Care
- General Surgery
- Urology
- Rheumatology
- Ophthalmology
- Sports Medicine

# Criticism

- Being the first users of electronic patient records in our region, many criticized the financial investment and the energy expenditure required to transition from a conventional paper-based record to an electronic medical record.

# More Than A Transcription Service

To be “worth it,” EMR had to be more than a transcription service, -- the EMR had to provide more value and benefit than simply documenting a patient encounter electronically.



# Electronic Patient Management

This realization grew into a vision of the electronic patient records becoming a tool for electronic patient management.

# Hospital Connectivity

- Development of connectivity with hospitals in our community. Admission H&Ps and Discharge Summaries are documented in the EMR on over 250 admissions per month.
- This allows for a seamless continuum of care whether the patient is at home, in the office, on the phone, in the nursing home, hospital, hospice, home health, physical therapy, or sending an e-mail.

# Phone Calls

The documentation for the past three years of **EVERY** telephone call which has come into our practice, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, with a computer generated time and date stamp and documentation of who called and why.

# Quality of Care/Quality of Life

- The employment of two CFNPs who work from 10:00 PM to 9:00 AM seven days a week:
  1. Seeing our patients in the hospital and ER
  2. Working up admissions, documenting H&Ps in the EMR
  3. Responding to telephone calls
  
- This has improved:
  1. The quality of care for our patients and
  2. The quality of life for our providers.

# Hospital Management

Completing the hospital discharge summary in the EMR which makes that data instantly available to:

1. Providers
2. The clinic
3. The nursing home
4. The IPA
5. The home health agency
6. Other members of the healthcare team

# Tickler File

- Utilizing the interface with Microsoft Outlook provided by the EMR, we remind ourselves of needed medical or diagnostic issues in the future.
- This has been particularly helpful in behavior modification, as it has allowed us to be reminded to call our patients and to make sure they have quit smoking, etc.

# Chronic-Conditions Management

- The identification of patients who need extra management allows us to call them on Thursday to make sure they are taking their medications and are doing well for the weekend. If they are not, they are given an appointment for Friday.
- They are also called on Monday to see how they did over the weekend. If they are not doing well, they are given an appointment immediately.

# Integrated Delivery: IPA and Private Practice

As a partner in an IPA and in a PSO, SETMA shares a CMS fiduciary responsibility to complete a Health and Wellness Questionnaire on every patient who joins one of the health plans offered by our PSO.

From this questionnaire a "Health Risk Assessment" is generated which allows us to predict which patients need immediate attention.



# **Integrated Delivery: IPA and Private Practice Cont.**

- Through electronic patient management, SETMA has been able to allow our IPA to make appointments for patients who are at risk.
- This saves us time and it improves the quality of care received by our patients.
- Reducing the HRA to an electronic computation through the EMR makes it a very useable tool for patient management.

# Electronic Practice Management

With multiple locations, and plans for another major expansion, the creation of a "medical team" requires communication:

1. For quality improvement
2. For patient management
3. For clinic management
4. For utilization management

which are only possible with electronic patient management through EMR, e-mail and office intranet.

# Creation of a Healthcare Team

The creation of a "healthcare team" with a common culture, purposes and goals, when providers do not have daily contact, is only possible with electronic communication and interaction.

# Clinic and Physical Therapy

The creation of templates for physical therapy to utilize the EMR allows providers and therapist to communicate seamlessly to improve the quality of care while controlling excessive utilization.

# Laboratory Results & CMS Compliance

The documentation that laboratory results have been reviewed electronically and the initiation of follow-up instructions electronically have improved quality of care and have provided a valuable tool for SETMA providers to remain in compliance with CMS requirements for documentation of the review of laboratory and ancillary services.

# Treatment Pathways & National Standards of Care

The ability to create treatment pathways based on national standards of care, particularly in regard to:

- Diabetes
- Congestive Heart Failure
- COPD
- Coumadin Therapy
- Cholesterol and Triglyceride treatment

have proved the clinical value of electronic patient management.

# Provider Evaluation

- With a growing multi-specialty, multiple-site practice, electronic patient management has provided a vehicle for the evaluation of provider performance.
- The establishment of quality standards and benchmarks of care are easy to monitor and to correct deficient behavior.

# Preventive Health Initiatives

The consistent providing of preventive health care, and the review of preventive care deficiencies, every time the patient is in the clinic is only possible in an electronic environment.



# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dynamic: Thinking About Patients Not in the Clinic

- EMR allows for the management of patients as a class, whether it is with a drug withdrawal or the evaluation of a standards of care initiative.
- The ability to think about the patient as a person, a problem and a preventive health strategy is critical to the dynamic of 21st Century medicine.

# Empowering the Team

- EMR has made it possible for all clinical personnel to be involved in patient care, whether at entry, evaluation, treatment or follow-up.
- Employee satisfaction has never been at a higher level.
- The sense of team work and collegiality permeates the clinic and is attributable to the fact that the EMR gives everyone the ability to contribute.

# Patient Access Expanded

- An interactive website where our patients can:
  - Request
    - appointments
    - Referrals
    - medication refills
  - Interact with their provider via e-mail
  - Complete questionnaires about healthcare concerns
- This has added value for our patients who want more access to their provider than at any time in the history of medicine.

# *Le Maladie Du Petite Papier*

- When I started medical school, one neurotic condition was called, *Le Maladie Du Petite Papier*, "the sickness of the small piece of paper."
- Health care has changed. We now want our patients to write down their symptoms and we want them to communicate those symptoms to us in "real time."
- E-mail is a great way to do this and the EMR gives us the ability to store those e-mails and our responses in the patient's chart.
- I tell my patients, "I can read faster than you can talk."

# Electronic Patient Management Via *NextGen*: A Huge Success

With the benefit of SETMA's financial results and the improvement in patient care via *NextGen's* electronic patient records morphed into electronic patient management, SETMA's transition from a paper-bound medical record to an electronic record has been a huge success.

# Expectations: Patients

- **SETMA's patients** now expect to have a record, which is complete, accurate and accessible.
- Their expectations are such that quality care for them begins with the capturing of precise and accurate data about their healthcare events whether in the clinic, on the telephone or in the hospital.

# Expectations: Provider

**SETMA's healthcare providers** now expect to challenge every patient with preventive healthcare issues, many of which are irrelevant to the event which precipitated the current encounter, but each of which addresses long-term health needs of every patient.

# Expectations: Customers

**SETMA's customers**, the payers, who pay our charges, expect the kind of documentation which gives them the ability to properly assess the quality of care and appropriateness of care which their membership is receiving from SETMA providers.



# Fahrenheit 451 Project

- Everyday, SETMA continues its “Fahrenheit 451 Project”.
- While we did not literally burn our ships or paper, but we do continue to find ways to eliminate the use of paper in every aspect of our practice.
- Each piece of eliminated paper represents an increase in efficiency, excellence and economy.

# The Future and Its Foundation

- The Future -- Electronic Patient Management
- The Foundation -- Electronic Patient Records
- We're glad we started. We've never had more fun practicing medicine and we've never provided the quality of care which our patients are experiencing in our clinics today. EMR has been a great tool and a great vehicle for our progress.