

Cheyenne Women's Clinic Opens Doors As a Paperless Practice and Thrives

At a Glance

Organization

Cheyenne Women's Clinic
Cheyenne, Wyo.

- Six-provider OB-GYN practice
- More than 8,500 active patients

Solution Spotlight

- Practice Partner® Appointment Scheduler
- Practice Partner® Medical Billing
- Practice Partner® Patient Records

Critical Issues

- Launching a new practice
- Effectively managing patient care and financial priorities
- Establishing a solid foundation for growth

Results

- Revenue growth averaging more than 20% per year
- Highly efficient operation with overhead running at approximately 30% of revenue (compared with 40% to 50% for the typical OB-GYN office)
- Improved cash flow and A/R (average collection time is less than two weeks)

When Cheyenne Women's Clinic opened its doors, all systems were go. The new practice had already implemented the Practice Partner® system of integrated electronic health record (EHR) and practice management applications from McKesson. With this solution in place, Cheyenne began operations with efficiencies that most OB-GYN practices lack: a paperless environment, seamless access to patient records both on-site and remotely, and optimal patient flow and revenue cycle processes. As a result, Cheyenne was able to realize lower than average overhead and revenue growth averaging more than 20% per year.

Challenges

When Jeff Storey, M.D., and Rene Hinkle, M.D., launched their practice, they knew they wanted an EHR system. "The writing was on the wall that an EHR would ultimately be a requirement for practices," explains Dr. Storey. "We could both see that it offered huge advantages for an obstetrics practice in terms of access to patient charts. Neither one of us wanted the hassle of going to the office in the middle of the night to retrieve patient information like we had to at our previous practice."

Answers

While visiting an office with the Practice Partner integrated EHR and practice management system, the physicians were struck by the solution's intuitive look and feel. "Rene immediately felt comfortable with Practice Partner," recalls Dr. Storey. "She was delighted that a computer program could look like a chart. I could see that it would be easy to make it work for the needs of our practice."

To prepare for the grand opening, Dr. Storey and McKesson's team began a rapid implementation. Dr. Storey functioned as the internal superuser, working with McKesson staff to configure the software.

Cheyenne's business plan called for a ramp up to a full schedule over about six to nine months; however, the practice underestimated the demand for services. Within 30 days after the launch, physicians had full schedules and added more than 150 new patients a week. Since many of these patients were from existing practices, they brought with them their paper charts.

Using Practice Partner, Cheyenne established a streamlined process for the rapid influx of patients. During the initial visit with the patient, nurses and medical

Case Study

"We started our own practice because we wanted to try new ideas and new ways of doing things. Practice Partner software has been central to helping us realize this goal."

Jeff Storey, M.D.

Cheyenne Women's Clinic

assistants would enter the patient's history into the EHR. On the two days that doctors were in surgery, the staff would scan and index information from the paper chart into Practice Partner.

Cheyenne also streamlined its billing processes. Paper superbills were replaced by the electronic encounter form in Practice Partner® Medical Billing.

The E&M coding wizard in Practice Partner® Patient Records helps the doctors accurately code visits without guesswork. Storey is very impressed by the accuracy of the coding wizard: "We have certified coders checking all charges against our documentation, and they rarely change the code Practice Partner assigns."

With a secure remote connection to the server at Cheyenne, the physicians can access patient records at home or the hospital. Because of the solution's integrated fax server capability, they can electronically fax documents directly from Practice Partner. This feature has proven useful when the doctors need a copy of the patient's history and physical exam to prepare to deliver a baby or perform a surgery.

Results

Cheyenne's rapid and efficient growth allowed it to quickly pay off its startup loan within five months of opening its doors.

Careful fine-tuning of the practice's internal processes provided a solid foundation for expansion: Four providers have been added in the past 18 months, and the practice is expected to increase the number of monthly baby deliveries from 30 to 50.

Cheyenne's financials are impressive. Annual revenue is increasing at more than 20% per year, while overhead is unusually low at roughly 36% (compared to 45% to 55% overhead of a typical OB-GYN practice). Part of the reason for the low overhead is that Practice Partner eliminates the need for specialized medical record personnel.

Cheyenne uses Practice Partner to affect costs in other ways too. The Practice Partner practice management solution combined with strong billing service has shrunk collection times from 45 days to less than two weeks.

"We started our own practice because we wanted to try new ideas and new ways of doing things," concludes Dr. Storey. "Practice Partner has been central to helping us realize this goal."

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