

Case Study

Comprehensive, Flexible and Easy to Use Product with Strong Continuing Support: Installing MedcomSoft Record in a Cardiology Practice

Customer:

Laurence O. Watkins, MD is a cardiologist in solo practice in Port St. Lucie, Florida. Founded in 2000, The Healthy Heart Center employs an office manager, a receptionist, a nurse, and a biller, and treats over 2,000 patients.

Challenge:

Dr. Watkins began practicing medicine in Port St. Lucie as part of a multi-specialty group (MSG). "One of the things I'd really enjoyed about being in the MSG was having access to the complete chart on the patients who were sent to me for consultation. I recognized more and more the importance of having complete documentation available."

Practicing as a consultant, most of Dr. Watkins' patients are referred to him by other physicians. "As a result," Watkins says, "I have extremely high standards for documentation. When I found that I was taking more and more time to dictate the note, and consequently the costs of dictation increased, I became interested in electronic medical records (EMR)."

Because he is involved with a number of organizations with an interest in sharing patient data, he was very much interested in selecting an interoperable system. During his selection process, Dr. Watkins asked difficult questions of vendors, such as how would data, collected in different ways and different formats, be integrated? He found, "there wasn't a good answer that did not involve sacrificing a lot of the data. Given its use of Medcin, MedcomSoft has solved that problem."

"MedcomSoft Record does a great deal. It's a comprehensive system, yet it is remarkably easy to use."

Solution:

According to Dr. Watkins, "There are simple EMRs on the market, but they do not do much. By contrast, MedcomSoft Record does a great deal. It's a comprehensive system, yet it is remarkably easy to use."

Dr. Watkins customized his system in order to streamline the documentation process, without sacrificing the quality of the record produced. "One of the great benefits to having Medcin as a database is the flexibility it allows me when using the forms and pre-filled protocols I've designed. If what I want to chart is not on that form, I can quickly select it from the Medcin hierarchy. In essence, all of the tasks that I perform commonly--plans, lab test list, the usual noninvasive diagnostic tests that cardiologists do, were put into forms, with the understanding that I could also go beyond that," says Dr. Watkins.

Despite the simplicity of using custom forms, Dr. Watkins finds it easier to chart histories by accessing Medcin directly. His patients often present him with more than a simple cardiac problem. "Medcin, says Dr. Watkins, "is organized in such a way as to reflect what I do as a cardiologist, the questions that I would ask about certain symptoms that might go along with arrhythmias, for example."

Results:

Without question, Dr. Watkins says, “the capacity to have complete patient information at my fingertips is a significant improvement in both how quickly and how effectively I treat patients.” Clinicians frequently spend time in an encounter, looking backward in the chart to find when they last performed a certain test or for the result of the last echocardiogram, for example. “With MedcomSoft Record, I know at a glance when a patient last had an echo or stress test, so I don’t have to wade through an old chart in order to get a complete picture.” When a patient complains of a particular symptom, Dr. Watkins is able to assess very quickly if it could be a reoccurrence of an older problem, or if something might have gone wrong with a graft, or if now is an appropriate time to do a repeat test. “MedcomSoft Record helps me to keep track,” says Dr. Watkins. “I am being reminded, without a tickler file, of the things I have done and may not have done. This functionality also has implications for improving the practice’s financial return, in the sense that I know at a glance if it is time for us to follow up on routine procedure, etc.”

Dr. Watkins uses a Welch Allyn EKG system, which integrates directly with Record. Results are immediately available in the patient chart. “I can make notes, annotate, and so forth, and I have those readings available if I need them in a visit.”

Record has also improved efficiency in communicating with other physicians. “One of the things I really enjoy is being able to electronically send a visit note without even having to print it. It sounds like a small thing, but that capability makes us quite efficient,” says Dr. Watkins.

Efficiency has also characterized Dr. Watkins’ interactions with MedcomSoft Inc. “I’d be remiss if I did not say this, because it reflects my experience: MedcomSoft’s people are available to me. The trainers were available to us by telephone or email in the weeks subsequent to implementation, tweaking little things, or going into our system remotely to alter and improve forms that we had created.”

After Dr. Watkins and his staff had used the system for six months, MedcomSoft trainers paid a return visit to the practice. “They were not satisfied with the assumption that because we’d been trained, that we were actually using the system to its full. As it happened, they found several elements of the software we were not using fully, and we started doing a number of things even better as a result of a follow up visit.”

Dr. Watkins remains quite pleased with both the product and the company. “I’ve seen other EMR companies, when they begin to have a larger install base, get thinner on the ground. As a result, it is not as easy to support as it once was. With MedcomSoft, even as the company grows, I am able to get support promptly. This gives me great confidence as a user.”

About MedcomSoft Inc.

MedcomSoft® is an innovative developer of software solutions that are changing the way the healthcare industry captures, manages and exchanges patient information. Through its powerful and flexible suite of products, MedcomSoft provides important tools that enable healthcare professionals to fully automate their practices and to efficiently connect to their pharmacies, laboratories, medical suppliers and insurance providers. www.medcomsoft.com

What is Medcin?

A hierarchical, numerically codified nomenclature designed to facilitate the capture of qualitative and quantitative medical data at the point of care, Medcin has been under development for more than 25 years. Featuring 280,000 discrete terms, Medcin reflects the clinical experiences of scores of physicians from institutions such as Johns Hopkins, Cornell, Harvard, and others. Each Medcin term is linked to clinically related terms, resulting in a comprehensive web of more than 73 million SOAP links, useful for decision support and intelligent prompting.