

Practice Profiles on Electronic Prescribing



"Handwritten prescriptions are often misread, so when we sought an electronic prescribing system, we wanted to take the guesswork out of the prescription process and establish an easier, more streamlined communication line with the pharmacy," says

Dr. Robert Resnik of Cary, N.C.

"Having detailed electronic tracking of all prescriptions gives our staff and providers access to the accurate history of a patient's current medications and all other medications that may have been tried," he says. "And complete electronic management of all refills allows us to further verify that the patient has received the correct medication and dosage during every refill."

"The use of direct computer-to-computer communication between our practice and the various pharmacies has definitely made our staff more productive and more satisfied, and has dramatically improved the quality of care we strive to provide to our patients." For instance, he says: "We are now able to catch some potentially dangerous drug-drug interactions on the front end, and we know immediately if alternative formulary selections are needed."

When it comes to managing the refill authorization process, Dr. Resnik and his colleagues advise all their patients to contact the pharmacy first, so that all refill requests can be initiated electronically by the pharmacy and captured in the practice's e-prescribing system.

In fact, the old fax- and phone-based process for managing prescription refills was so labor-intensive that Dr. Resnik's staff used to spend 5-6 hours per day managing these requests. Today, between reducing paper chart retrieval and the time delays associated with phoning and faxing, Dr. Resnik's staff is able to manage all refill requests in about an hour per day.

"In our last year alone, through a combination of reduced overhead costs and increased revenue (from being able to see more patients), we saved roughly \$40,000. For larger practices, the economic impact will be much more dramatic."

— Dr. Resnik

PRACTICE STATS



Robert Resnik, M.D.

- ▶ In practice for 18 years
- ▶ Practice name and specialty: Cary Adult Medicine (Cary, N.C.) — Internal Medicine
- ▶ Prescribing system used: DrFirst Rcopia
- ▶ Total staff in practice: 6
- ▶ Average number of patients seen per day: 75
- ▶ Approx. number of refill authorizations per week: 450-500 (during face-to-face visits with patients), 150/week (received electronically from pharmacies)

"When you take away all those refill-related calls and faxes, we are able to provide much more timely and focused response to the remaining calls that come into the office," says Dr. Resnik.

SOFTWARE TOOLS HELP

"Because we are a primary care practice we literally prescribe hundreds of drugs on a routine basis. The clinical decision support functionality, such as automatic alerts related to potential drug-drug or drug-allergy interactions are very useful," he says. "It used to be that you'd have to remember all those details – and with the sheer number of drugs in use today and the many potential complications, you simply can't."

"There's been no downside only upside, in terms of improving safety for our patients and efficiency for our practices," he adds. "Without a doubt, the use of e-prescribing has been a tremendously important part of our practice, in terms of improving efficiency, satisfaction and quality of care."

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