



ACCURO EMR CASE STUDY

Going paperless

How one busy clinic improved its workflows while reducing expenses

The South Side Women's Health Centre (South Side) in Edmonton, Alberta is an obstetrical and gynecological clinic consisting of 9 physician-surgeons, 12 Medical Office Assistants, 1 Licensed Practical Nurse, 1 Medical Transcriptionist and a Clinic Manager.



Striving for the best in women's health

At South Side, the use of paper notes, forms, reports, faxes, letters and patient charts had run its course and no longer met the clinic's needs for efficiency and cost management. Integrating Accuro's electronic medical records platform helped alleviate these problems, while positioning the clinic to participate in provincial eHealth initiatives. Clinic Manager Abbie Coros believes that what makes South Side unique is that it is a relatively large group, considering these types of specialists often practice alone or in pairs. Operating in larger groups allows Physicians to consult with each other on complex or difficult cases, ensuring best-quality care for patients, and provide better continuity of care – if one is away, others can take over caring for their patients within the same facility.

Challenges

Like other physician practices and clinics still operating in 'paper mode', South Side was finding it increasingly difficult to operate efficiently. Staff were spending up to three hours daily hunting for paper charts in various clinic locations. In addition, as many as 150 women coming through the clinic each day are sent off for various tests, including biopsies, ultrasounds, blood work and more. The thousands of pages of test results that get mailed or faxed back to the clinic need to be signed-off by physicians and filed within each patient's chart. When results were not filed promptly and readily accessible, the RNAs often ended up having to go onto the Internet to find the results and print them out.

Operating in paper mode was also making it difficult to keep costs under control in terms of staffing, and not helping the clinic stay up to date or professional when it came to recruiting new physicians. Compounding these challenges, their scheduling and billing system was out of date and the office PCs had reached end-of-life and were increasingly vulnerable to problems.

The Solution

"Instead of looking strictly at a functionality checklist, I mapped out the 'chain of events' and created flowcharts corresponding to a number of workflow scenarios to see what might be unique about how we operate versus other types of specialists, or compared to a General Practitioner clinic," explained Coros about her approach to considering which EMR product and vendor to recommend.

After sharing the flowcharts with four EMR vendors, having each demonstrate how their product would specifically support OB/GYN workflows, and then visiting other customers using each of these products, Coros felt that AccuroEMR would be the best fit for South Side.

"The detailed chart I prepared for our physicians, comparing potential EMR products as well as our existing paper-based process, clearly showed that AccuroEMR offers considerable advantages," stated Coros, explaining that attributes of AccuroEMR critical to South Side included: the product features met clinic needs and offered opportunity for improvements in patient safety; the automation supported by the product would generate tangible ROI in the form of lower overhead costs and increased patient throughput; AccuroEMR would be easy for physicians and staff to use and not require extensive data entry; licensing fees for AccuroEMR would be lower over the long term; and QHR offered a robust model for ongoing support.

"This was priceless to me and allowed us to become real champions of AccuroEMR within the clinic, provide support to users internally and answer all their questions, so we were ready to start productive work on the first day,"

TWO-STAGE ROLLOUT AVOIDS DISRUPTION

An early highlight for South Side was getting access to the software and AccuroEMR database three months ahead of the go-live date. This allowed Coros and her assistant to become comfortable with the software and collaborate with the Accuro team to work out the workflows ahead of time. They also used the time to build their forms and doctor consult templates prior to go-live.

The templates and the ability to easily build letters and forms were part of why they chose AccuroEMR in the first place.