



In Search of the “Holy Grail” An EMR That Really Works! meridianEMR

By Dr. Neil Baum

Dr. Neil Baum is a urologist in New Orleans, Louisiana and is on the clinical faculty of Tulane Medical School and Louisiana State University School of Medicine. He is also a proud graduate of the Baylor College of Medicine urology residency program in 1976.

As a national consultant, speaker and medical writer for The Urology Times and Journal of Medical Practice Management, I have had the opportunity to review and test dozens of electronic medical record systems over the years. However, I found that almost all of them had deficiencies that either burdened and slowed down the physician, ultimately reducing the efficiency of the practice, or physicians were forced to return to the paper chart just like the good old days because it took too long to make the system usable on a daily basis for every type of patient encounter.

An EMR program is finally available that has all the bells and whistles as well as the core functionality that allows you to practice medicine with enhanced efficiency and at an affordable price. The system also results in an increase in reimbursements by accurate E and M coding that can survive the microscope of the most intense audit from Medicare, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) or any other payer. In this article, I will review the best EMR that I have ever seen for urologists, **meridianEMR**, which uses clinical templates developed by a board certified urologist, and constantly enhanced with input from hundreds of meridianEMR urology clients.

The System Thinks Like a Physician

The physician members of meridianEMR developed clinical templates that built in the thought process of office-based physicians. As a physician conducts their normal exams, they can simply tap on a tablet PC or point-and-click a mouse, and their visit is completely and thoroughly documented. The resulting note is built on “synthetic dictation” automatically generated from the template and choices made during the exam. Most of the other EMR systems on the market provide tools that allow a physician to build their own templates, but this is extremely time consuming and unless you are a computer guru, you will not enjoy the process and will quickly abandon your quest to go paperless. I have spoken to many practices across the country that purchased an EMR that requires the doctors to create or develop their own templates, and even after two years many of them are still not “live.”

The Bottom Line

Normally, I include the summary of my article at the end, but I would like to get your attention by giving you the bottom line of meridianEMR from a pure “dollars and sense” standpoint. As a result of implementing the meridianEMR, a solo urologist put an extra \$6,600\month into his profit column by moving his coding curve to the right (i.e., increasing the Level 4 and 5 E and M codes and decreasing the Level 1 and 2 codes). He also decreased his expenses by \$1,500\month by eliminating transcription costs. So what was the real net effect for a typical urologist? He increased his profit by approximately \$8,100\month since he implemented meridianEMR. That computes to \$97,200 annually without seeing one additional patient and without working one minute longer than he did before! Using meridianEMR with urology-specific templates truly allows us to work smarter – and not harder. Isn’t that the ultimate goal of using technology in our practices?

The Unique Features of meridianEMR

The meridianEMR software is user-friendly and employs the same intuitive process that physicians

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use when they see patients. The software is normally used by doctors with a tablet PC, where most of the data is inserted by using dropdown menus and tapping on the computer screen through specialty-based templates of the most common conditions in that specialty. The tablets use wireless technology so the doctor is free to walk throughout the practice.

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One of the most powerful features of the meridianEMR is its ability to correctly and accurately compute the E and M of your patient encounter. Your days of under-coding are over, and your days of increased reimbursement have just arrived! Best of all, you can go to sleep knowing that you can survive any audit because you have legally documented what you have done for your patients. It is the only software I have seen that not only incorporates all the rules from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), but true medical decision-making which only physicians can provide. As a matter of fact, a meridianEMR client who had successfully survived a Medicare audit was told by the auditor that the charts were the best electronic medical records she had ever seen.

Virtual 100% Uptime that No Other Company Offers

One of the outstanding features that this system includes is their unique “blended model,” where a small but powerful server is installed in your office. This provides you with a very fast and reliable system and peace of mind that your data is secure. At the same time data is being stored on your server, the system sends the exact data to the company’s Web servers as a backup, and as a result you can access your patient information any time, any place, via an Internet connection in a HIPAA-compliant manner.

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This is truly the “best of both worlds.” In all other systems, if your server goes down, you are paralyzed and will be required to return to paper charts. If the vendor is using an ASP model (where your records and software operate only through the Internet), and the Internet is down, you are non-functional. In meridianEMR’s model, if your office server becomes inoperable, within seconds you can bypass the server in the office and connect to continue working through the Internet. After the server in the office is repaired, the system automatically synchs up any new data entered via the Internet onto your server so both systems have exactly the same data once again. The meridianEMR offers virtual 100 percent uptime with electronic medical records; technology that only very large systems with redundant servers can match, usually at a cost of several hundreds of thousands of dollars. Furthermore, meridianEMR also saves your staff time (and your money) by providing automatic backups of your data.

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Now the final bottom line: The question is not if you are going to transition from paper to an EMR, but when are you going to do it? Of course, there are no perfect programs, but meridianEMR is about as close to perfect as it gets!

As you can tell, I was extremely impressed with this product and believe any physician seriously considering an EMR for their office should include meridianEMR in their search. For more information, visit www.meridianEMR.com or call 1-877-411-4367.

