

Rockhill Orthopedics

Reduces costs and increases efficiency with
Centricity® Electronic Medical Record
and Centricity® Practice Management



Solution overview

Situation

For nearly 60 years, Rockhill Orthopedics has delivered quality orthopedic care to the Kansas City community. At the main location in Kansas City and satellite facility in Lee's Summit, Missouri, Rockhill's physicians focus on the surgical and non-surgical management of musculoskeletal problems. Specialists in physiatry, upper extremity, and foot and ankle provide expert diagnosis and treatment of a full range of musculoskeletal problems.

Business challenge

As many as 300 patients a day visit Rockhill, and some of the surgeons see 70 patients in a six-hour period, so efficiency is extremely important. "Our physicians practice cutting edge medicine, and Rockhill Orthopedics is at the cutting edge of the electronic age as well," said Karen Frank, Practice Administrator, Rockhill Orthopedics. Rockhill takes pride in the fact that its physicians stay abreast of the latest developments in their fields, and the practice also has a history of implementing technology to increase patient service and efficiency. With its existing Practice Management and Electronic Medical Records systems becoming outmoded, Rockhill made a thorough search for a replacement.

Business solution

"We knew exactly what we wanted," stated Frank. "Real-time capabilities, PM and EMR systems that were merged as closely as possible, and price were all key criteria." Rockhill selected Centricity Practice Management (PM) and Centricity Electronic Medical Record (EMR) and went live in 2005.

Rockhill's previous EMR system had been little more than a glorified text editor, according to Anne S. Rosenthal, M.D. of Rockhill Orthopedics. Added Frank, "The old EMR system was not real-time, and we did a dump at night when we did our backup. The result was that no one could access that patient until the download. Some Rockhill patients make an appointment and arrive the same day, so we ended up with multiple, duplicate patient records, and it was a mess."

"Centricity is real-time, and that's vital to us," said Frank. "While Centricity PM and EMR were not merged when we purchased them, GE demonstrated that they were headed in that direction, and soon we'll implement Centricity Practice Solution. Price-wise, we couldn't beat Centricity, and with the added value of the GE name behind it, Centricity met all of Rockhill's requirements," she stated.

Benefits of the solution

Cost Reductions and ROI

"Centricity has made a significant impact on cost control at Rockhill. FTEs are our highest overhead, and with the help of Centricity, we've reduced staff over 50 percent, from 82 to 47," said Karen Frank, Practice Administrator, Rockhill Orthopedics.

With Centricity in place, the practice was chartless, and Rockhill downsized its file clerk staff within three months of the implementation. "We reduced the staff in our front office area, and I adjusted the workflow to increase efficiency," said Frank. "Being chart-free also means more space for patient care. We don't have a chart room at our home location, and it's a huge area that is providing eight more patient exam rooms," Frank added.

"When we purchased other solutions in the past, I heard repeatedly that we'd reduce our FTEs, but it had never happened. With Centricity it did: our back office runs more smoothly, and we simply don't need as much help to run the clinic. Right away, we were able to let go a \$50,000 transcription employee," said Frank.

Rockhill saved 28 percent on office supplies in the first year with Centricity, and postage costs were reduced by 40 percent. "That was a big win, and it took less than four weeks to achieve it," noted Frank. "Everything that came in through the phone was put into the system immediately, and as we got more efficient, we found we needed fewer people."

Accounts receivable (A/R) days have fallen dramatically with Centricity. "Before Centricity, it would be 60 to 90 days before we got anything in, and some was sitting at 120 days," said Frank. "GE told us that we would not miss a beat financially the day we went live, and it's true, our turnaround is great. From the moment we started submitting claims electronically, our money came in so fast that we see a turnaround time of about 10 days now," she added.

Company profile

- Practice founded in 1949
- Providers: 10
- Overall employees: 47
- Specialties: orthopedics, rheumatology, and physiatry
- Physician-owned practice
- Locations: 2

Workflow Improvements

Rockhill implemented a remote wireless system and offered physicians and staff tablets or laptops. "Our techs all carry tablets, but our doctors can choose either one. We do electronic signing, no charts, and that turned out to be a really valuable decision. We're not pulling charts, not losing messages, and everything is much more efficient," said Frank.

By taking advantage of Centricity's flexibility, Rockhill has created forms that support the unique needs of the practice. "We use a lot of forms, and we've created quite a few to save even more time entering data, including one that emulates a super bill," said Frank.

"We have a huge workman's comp practice, and we customized a form to solve a workflow issue related to that," said Dr. Rosenthal. "We need to know whether a patient is comp or not to provide the appropriate test approvals also provide a work note when they come to the office. We built a form that enables us to tag them with one click, a simple yes or no, in the header."

Time Savings and Increased Accountability

"With Centricity, I can document my patient exams faster and more effectively," said Dr. Rosenthal. "I know my level of coding is correct, and I can check it easily. I've made forms to order MRI's and take other steps to save time,"

Dr. Rosenthal uses a touch screen to further increase time savings: "Some of my partners still handwrite their therapy prescriptions, and I've challenged them a couple of times. I can complete the on-screen form before they even write in the patient's name."

The entire practice works remotely, accessing the system from any location. "We can choose when to work, and I've definitely noticed that the doctors are timelier in signing off on their notes," said Frank. "they can log in from home ore between cases, and we have much faster, better access to all of the doctors than before we had Centricity."

Frank emphasizes that from a management standpoint, Centricity has helped make each member of the practice more accountable. "No one shares logins, so I can track who has done what based on a login. A paper chart could be in the trunk of a doctor's car, but now we know where every chart is. We're more accountable and compliant at all times. We have found that billing is going out cleaner, with fewer missed charges than in the past. Our doctors do their own billing, and that puts the accountability right at the beginning. versus someone else finding later. We realized we must have missed a lot of charges.

Patient Care Benefits

"Centricity has made us much more efficient, and has also enhanced the level of medical care because everyone is documenting better," said Frank.

Dr. Rosenthal agrees: "From a patient care standpoint, now I can go online in the operating room between cases, and check messaging. With Centricity, messages are answered in a much more timely fashion, and we can confirm that 'yes, the doctor addressed this particular issue at this specific time,'" she explained.

"We are triaging our medical issues better than we ever have," said Frank. "With narcotics, for example, if we get a message, I can send it to the doctor on call to address right away. With everyone checking messages at certain times, even on weekends, we can be sure that no patient is getting something they shouldn't," Frank added.

"Patients really like to see that the information they filled out in the lobby and the things they tell me in the exam room are right in front of me on the laptop," said Dr. Rosenthal. "I can show them that instead of flipping through a chart, I have their tests or MRI results on the computer, and we can review that information together," Dr. Rosenthal said.

"Centricity makes my orthopedic practice run more smoothly. It's easier for our employees to do their work, because when a call comes in, the patient chart is there with all of the information immediately available. It's also brought us significant savings in employee costs, postage, and office supplies. I would love to see a world where every practice was on Centricity, and every patient would come in with their electronic health records and we would know their medical history."

Anne S. Rosenthal, M.D.,
Rockhill Orthopedics

Looking ahead to Centricity Practice Solution

Rockhill is looking forward to implementing Centricity Practice Solution in 2007. "We had the opportunity to use Centricity Practice Solution in a lab environment at a GE event, and we're very eager to get it in place here. The merged system will help us further increase efficiencies in many ways. Just one example is that our doctors are not trained to look at the PM system at all, so our test and surgery schedulers need to document on both the PM and EMR sides, and we can eliminate that duplicate effort," said Frank.

Summary

At Rockhill Orthopedics, Centricity Practice Management and EMR have made a significant difference in decreasing costs and increasing efficiency:

- Reducing staff over 50 percent
- Eliminating chart storage to provide eight more patient exam rooms
- Saving 28 percent on office supplies
- Reducing postage costs by 40 percent
- Reducing A/R to a turnaround time as low as 10 days
- Accelerating physicians' sign-offs on notes
- Improving timely access to physicians by staff
- Decreasing missed charges
- Enhancing the level of medical care through improved documentation

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