

THE SPINE AND ORTHOPEDIC INSTITUTE COUPLES DRAGON MEDICAL PRACTICE EDITION WITH ORTHOPAD TO DELIVER SIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS AND MORE **ACCURATE DOCUMENTATION**



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— Scott Colby, CIO
Spine and Orthopedic Institute
Tulsa, OK

CHALLENGE

- The practice wanted to reduce the time spent documenting results as well as overall turnaround time.

SOLUTION

- Speech-enable the EMR by coupling Dragon® Medical Practice Edition with OrthoPad to create complete, real-time patient notes.

RESULTS

- Reduced annual transcription costs by \$70,000
- More thorough exams
- Higher coding levels
- Faster turnaround times speed billing—and payment—cycles
- Improved patient satisfaction

SUMMARY

The Spine and Orthopedic Institute of Tulsa, Oklahoma has seven physicians and one physician's assistant providing spine care, neurosurgery, sports medicine, joint care, hand and wrist, pain management and diagnostic imaging services.

The practice has made the decision to deploy "front-end," real-time speech recognition alongside its OrthoPad® Electronic Medical Record (EMR) to improve clinical workflow. The practice has recognized significant cost savings and delivers more timely and accurate documentation that dramatically improve its level of service and responsiveness to referring physicians.

DEPLOYING AN EMR RIGHT FROM THE START

As a relatively young organization, the Spine and Orthopedic Institute wanted to implement the OrthoPad EMR solution right from its inception. OrthoPad incorporates X-rays and other high-quality images into the medical record to help physicians improve care and communication with patients.

Despite a strong commitment to use of OrthoPad, however, the physicians had reservations about their ability to document exams thoroughly using the EMR alone. The physicians believed that typing notes into the EMR would be too time consuming, while point-and-click templates lacked the requisite level of detail. “The physicians felt it would be quicker to pick up a microphone and record the detailed notes they needed,” explained Scott Colby, CIO of the Spine and Orthopedic Institute.

Unfortunately, the standard dictation workflow was cumbersome and time consuming. Physicians dictated their notes and gave the recorder to a medical assistant at the end of the day, who in turn transferred the files to a shared network drive. The transcriptionist then accessed the drive, pulled off the files, transcribed the files, and then put them back into the folder. Later, the medical assistant or a physician would have to proof the notes and enter them into the EMR.

THE SOLUTION: A SPEECH-ENABLED EMR

Dragon Medical coupled with OrthoPad promised to simplify the dictation workflow by allowing physicians to dictate their notes immediately following each exam, proofread them on the spot, and store them directly in the EMR. It would also ultimately minimize transcription costs and turnaround time.

EXPERT CONSULTING FROM DATEL SOLUTIONS

Datel Solutions, a Certified Dragon Medical Partner, oversaw a phased roll-out of Dragon Medical Practice Edition. Datel performed the installation, integrated Dragon Medical with OrthoPad, and provided hands-on one-to-one training for the physicians. “Rick Lobel was our trainer,” said Colby. “He works really well with the doctors. After an hour of training, they’re comfortable with Dragon Medical and ready to roll.”

David Mokhtee, M.D. Hand Surgeon concurred, “During the training session, we went over the commands and nuances and at the same time covered the workflow in the EMR. This was very important to me. It brought it all together and gave me a good grasp of how to use Dragon with Orthopad.”

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

While experience with older speech recognition technologies had left Colby and the physicians skeptical of the technology, everyone at the practice was immediately impressed with Dragon Medical Practice Edition. Dr. Mokhtee recalled, “I didn’t think Dragon Medical Practice Edition would recognize words as clearly as it does and have been pleasantly surprised. I’ve had no problems with recognition.”

In addition, Colby created a number of templates for each physician that further simplify and speed data entry with Dragon Medical Practice Edition. These templates eliminate the need for physicians to re-dictate standard portions of the exam. Instead, physicians need only specify information specific to each patient.

LOWER TRANSCRIPTION COSTS

Already, the practice is saving \$70,000 annually in dictation costs for the five physicians currently using Dragon Medical and Dragon Medical Practice Edition.

REAL-TIME TURNAROUND IMPROVES ACCURACY AND SERVICE

Previously, notes came back from the transcription service after 24 to 48 hours and were then proofread. Dragon Medical Practice Edition allows physicians to see their notes immediately, which allows them to fix any problems on the spot and improves accuracy.

Explained Dr. Mokhtee, “When you get the transcription back after a few days and see an

error, it may not be easy to recall what occurred and fix it. With Dragon Medical Practice Edition's immediate turnaround, I don't have to worry about going back and fixing problems. Additionally, I've been in situations where the note was lost and I'd have to try to re-dictate from memory a few days later, which could be difficult. Now, if there's a problem, it's much easier to re-dictate the note right then and there."

The rapid turnaround time also improves service to patients and referring physicians. For example, some patients are involved with workers compensation claims. Instant turnaround time for notes means that the physicians can now send reports to claims adjusters within minutes. Referring physicians are also pleased to receive reports quickly.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Using Dragon Medical Practice Edition keeps the day flowing more smoothly for physicians. As Colby explained, "Our physicians see 30-60 patients per day. Documenting each exam within the EMR using templates can be a 10 minute ordeal. Speech recognition cuts that time in half. This allows the physicians to stay on schedule. Patient satisfaction has improved because the physicians aren't so backed up at the end of the day."

When it's time to go on vacation, Dragon Medical Practice Edition improves quality of life even further. As Dr. Mokhtee noted, "When I go on vacation, my notes are done. I don't have two days worth of transcriptions backed up and waiting for my review when I return."

FASTER BILLING

Because Dragon Medical Practice Edition allows the physicians to complete notes right away, the notes are in the chart immediately. The faster the notes are finished and in the chart, the faster the billing process can begin, which ultimately speeds payment.

HIGHER LEVELS OF CODING

Colby has created a number of templates that physicians complete using Dragon Medical Practice Edition and that comply with the highest level of coding standards. Using these templates allows physicians to perform more thorough exams and bill at a higher level. "Previously, we typically had more lower level dictations," said Colby. "If physicians didn't put in everything necessary for a level 5 we couldn't charge for that level. Now, our templates are built to ensure that we meet stringent requirements. This has allowed us to provide a higher level of service to both the patient and the referring physician and bill accordingly."

A GOOD RECOMMENDATION

Overall, The Spine and Orthopedic Institute is very happy with Dragon Medical Practice Edition. Said Colby, "Dragon Medical Practice Edition has been nothing but beneficial for us. I've already recommended it to other physicians."

HIGHLIGHTS

- Five physicians currently use Dragon Medical Practice Edition within OrthoPad
- \$70,000 in annual transcription expenses have already been eliminated.
- Rather than producing canned notes, Dragon Medical Practice Edition enables physicians to create thorough and accurate documentation unique to each patient encounter
- Comprehensive notes lead to confidence in coding at the maximum appropriate level
- Billing—and payment—is faster
- Physicians are better able to stick to their schedules