

## Case Study

### PROBLEM

New vascular practice wanted to:

- Reduce excessive paperwork
- Phase out paper claims
- Shorten payment cycle

### PURCHASE FACTORS

The practice noted:

- Vascular medicine experience
- Interface required minimal training
- On-site training before going live
- Access to continued live support within the product

### RESULTS

First-year changes include:

- \$11,000 in annual savings: reduced transcription costs, paper, toner, ink and chart storage space
- Increased revenue: improved coding accuracy; better collection tools
- Reduced claims payment time: 10–14 days, private insurers; 3–4 weeks, Medicare

## Advanced Vein & Vascular Center

Launched in May 2007, the Advanced Vein & Vascular Center, Inc., is a boutique practice in Wayne, Pennsylvania, specializing in the treatment of vascular diseases. The center treats a broad range of ailments, from cosmetic conditions such as spider veins to more serious issues such as venous ulcers. It also offers a full-service lab that performs venous ultrasound studies.

### THE PHYSICIANS' DILEMMA

In establishing the Advanced Vein & Vascular Center, founder Dr. Anthony Carabasi, a board-certified vascular surgeon, felt compelled to provide more profitable elective procedures and services to improve revenues and compensate for declines in traditional reimbursement.

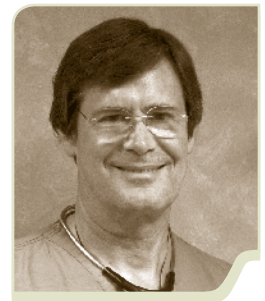
"Physicians face financial realities they can no longer ignore," says Martha Stephens, Dr. Carabasi's business partner. "They need to generate cash payments that don't go through insurance companies and that avoid getting bogged down for months in claims processing."

In addition, Dr. Carabasi wanted to address the burden of excessive paperwork that he had experienced while working in a hospital environment. "Work at a large university practice was so encumbered by red tape that it was difficult to find time to interact with patients," he says.

### PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Dr. Carabasi and Stephens realized that most insurers are phasing out acceptance of paper claims or refusing them entirely. They decided to investigate electronic health records and practice management (EHR/PM) systems. They wanted a solution that would not only enable electronic claims, but also enhance practice efficiency, profitability and growth. On their list of criteria were factors such as reliability, ease of use, security, support and training, vascular medicine experience, and satisfied practices that were willing to share their experiences.

"While some vendors offered an online presence and access from anywhere, they fell short on important criteria such as support, template customization and training," says Dr. Carabasi. "We wanted a solution that would put everything we needed at our fingertips, not just permit us to bill electronically."



***"There's a difference between writing or dictating a note and using a system such as Aprima, but the results are well worth the time and energy involved in making the transition."***

R. Anthony Carabasi III, MD,  
Advanced Vein & Vascular Center

Training and support were especially critical to Stephens. "There was no point in investing thousands in an EHR/PM if we couldn't get adequate training or get a human being on the phone when there's a problem that could shut us down for hours," she says.

In their search for an electronic solution, Carabasi and Stephens conferred with other local practices that had already implemented EHR/PM systems. The majority had been using one vendor, but Stephens remained skeptical of that company's responsiveness. "They couldn't answer my questions in a timely manner and submitted somewhat sloppy proposals," she says.

When a general practitioner from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, recommended Aprima because of its user-friendly interface, support and training, Stephens was impressed

## Practice Profile

### ADVANCED VEIN & VASCULAR CENTER

Dr. Anthony Carabasi is one of the country's most accomplished vascular surgeons. He served as chief of vascular surgery at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia for 17 years before opening his private practice in 2007.

Over the years, Dr. Carabasi has received many top honors. He has been selected a "Top Doc" in *Philadelphia Magazine*, consistently since 1994. He was also considered a "Top Vein Doc" by the magazine in 2005 and 2006 and identified as a Castle Connolly Top Doctor 2004-2006.

Dr. Carabasi's Advanced Vein & Vascular Center is the first of its kind in the Philadelphia region and is the only full-time vein center within a 75-mile radius.

### ANNUAL SAVINGS

Realized operational cost savings in 2008



with the endorsement. She contacted Aprima and within 48 hours had a complete proposal outlining cost, system requirements, training schedule and support platforms, planning, workflow analysis, customization, implementation and support.

"Throughout the proposal process, Aprima displayed the kind of support and professionalism our practice needs to sustain profitability, growth and quality patient care," says Stephens.

### THOROUGH PREPARATION = SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION

The Advanced Vein & Vascular Center began using Aprima's scheduling and demographic functions almost two months before the October 23, 2007, formal go-live date.

The staff became comfortable with "as many elements as possible before we abandoned paper," Stephens says. During the go-live week, the Center reduced its patient load by more than half, allowing for several days of immersion training. Aprima trainers and implementation specialists not only taught staff members and Dr. Carabasi how to use the Aprima EHR/PM solution, but also stood by to help and answer questions for the first few days. Within three months, the staff had developed a high comfort level with the system's EHR component.

### RESULTS IN THE EXAM ROOM... AND IN THE BANK

The Center's staff is pleased with the solution's ability to complete referrals instantly at the end of a patient visit, facilitate patient communication and deliver convenient access to patient information.

The practice now needs only 5-6 hours per week for billing versus 15-20 hours per week before Aprima. "By the time we're ready to stop work at the end of the day, there's very little left for us to do in terms of correspondence and records," says Dr. Carabasi. "We can go home and enjoy the evening, knowing that our work is done and come in refreshed the next morning."

The Center is proud of the results it has achieved with the Aprima solution. This includes a reduction in office congestion and elimination of costs associated with renting storage space. Before moving to Aprima, the Center filled a file drawer every month with paper charts. The Center also canceled its plan to hire a billing professional who would have cost \$40,000-\$50,000 annually (plus benefits), because Aprima manages billing and collections so efficiently.



### APRIMA IS CARE

*Our support team is skilled in how providers use our software across specialties.*



*"I can remember filling out paper claims five to seven times. Now, because I get reminders of missing pieces such as zip code or gender, I can easily make corrections and send the claim on for payment."*

Martha Stephens, Manager  
Advanced Vein & Vascular Center

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