



Case Study

PROBLEM

Pediatrician faced a dilemma:

- Too much time spent searching for patient information
- Paper charts limited necessary detail
- Chart access from patient's home was critical

PURCHASE FACTORS

The practice noted:

- Single integrated EHR/PM solution
- Easy-to-learn software for minimal downtime during implementation
- Well-supported system without the "hassles" of interfaces

RESULTS

- Easy accommodation of the practice's unique, innovative business model
- More time to care for patients
- Office efficiency
- Flexible billing options

Next Generation Pediatrics

Like too many patients and physicians, Dr. Erik Cohen was frustrated with the way medical care is usually provided. He is a board-certified pediatrician who had been splitting his time between a busy urban pediatric emergency room in Hartford, Connecticut, and a suburban pediatric group practice in Simsbury, Connecticut.

Dr. Cohen felt limited by the traditional practice. He couldn't spend enough time with patients and he lacked the time, space and supplies to provide even simple emergency care at his office. So Dr. Cohen set out to create a better model of patient care, merging high technology with an old-fashioned personal touch.

THE RIGHT SYSTEM BY THE RIGHT COMPANY

To be successful, Dr. Cohen knew that his innovative practice model would require an equally innovative computer system. He wanted an efficient, flexible EHR; complete portability; an integrated knowledge base; and the ability to connect with clinical equipment, labs and pharmacies.

Most importantly, Dr. Cohen was looking for a truly unified solution—with clinical and administrative functions in the same application and one database—for his new practice, because he wasn't planning to employ an in-house computer staff. "I didn't want to deal with multiple companies or worry about an update from one affecting all the interfaces," says Dr. Cohen.

This requirement eliminated many of the best-known systems right away. "We talked to five or six different companies and saw demonstrations of all their systems," he remembers. "Of those I saw, Aprima was clearly the best." Because Aprima EHR/PM is a single application built on a single database, it gave Dr. Cohen the flexibility and power to support this innovative office.

PRACTICE AS YOU LIKE

Aprima's flexibility has helped Dr. Cohen create his ideal practice. Even though the doctor had no

experience with electronic records before starting this practice, he was able to get started easily and be comfortable in just a few months.

He says, "It was easy to set everything up the way I want. For example, I could set up the history to take exactly the information I'm looking for. Running a private practice on paper was much harder. It's very frustrating not to be able to find information or be able to read your handwriting. And it's hard to capture enough detail on paper. Aprima makes it easy to give more detail and keep updated problem lists."

Dr. Cohen does a lot of moving around, both in the chart and around the city. He offers home visits to all his patients who live within a 30-minute drive of his office. Aprima allows him to provide those home visits with all the information and charting capabilities he has in his office.

"I love the way Aprima's cache mode lets me care for patients anywhere. One of my patients requires frequent hospitalizations; using Aprima, I'm able to care for her at home, with her entire medical record at hand."

Dr. Erik Cohen, M.D.
Next Generation Pediatrics

Practice Profile

NEXT GENERATION PEDIATRICS

Next Generation Pediatrics is a single-physician practice in Greenwich, Connecticut. Dr. Erik Cohen, a board-certified pediatrician, opened this practice with the goal of providing a significantly increased level of service by decreasing the number of patients in the practice.

Next Generation limits the number of patients seen per day to 6–8, about one-fifth the average patient load, so that Dr. Cohen and his staff can get to know each family and spend more time with each patient. In addition, he gives his patients his cell phone number and makes house calls. His office takes pride in providing decreased waiting room times, same-day appointments, extended appointment times and full in-house laboratory specimen collection.

Dr. Cohen wants his patients to spend less time in specialists' offices and emergency rooms. He and his nurses all have experience working in Emergency Room Pediatrics at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford, so they're equipped to stitch, staple and glue cuts.

Read more about Next Generation Pediatrics at ngpeds.com.

He explains, "One of my patients has a syndrome that causes her to vomit continually for days on end. By age 7, she had been hospitalized 14 times for dehydration associated with the vomiting. She's had three episodes since joining my practice, and I've been able to treat them all with IV fluids given at her home. That's genuinely changed her family's life."

Dr. Cohen wouldn't be able to offer that service without Aprima's replication mode, also called "Anytime, Anywhere Access." This unique feature saves all the information associated with active charts (for example, that day's appointments) on a tablet PC or in laptop memory. This lets Dr. Cohen work from anywhere, just as if he were connected to the office server. The next time he's in network range, Aprima automatically syncs the server with his computer, saving the most recent data. The function is completely transparent to him.

THE BENEFITS OF INTEGRATION

Next Generation Pediatrics has interfaces with Quest Laboratories and the Midmark IQmark digital spirometer and digital ECG. Aprima's ability to interface smoothly with devices and the laboratory helps Dr. Cohen and his nurses get information immediately, with no errors and with no manual data entry—saving many hours every week.

With administrative tools, scheduling, billing and medical records in one system, the whole office runs efficiently. Dr. Cohen can send prescriptions electronically while the family is still in his exam room, eliminating waits at the pharmacy. Coding is automated, instant, accurate and well-documented.

FLEXIBLE BILLING ARRANGEMENTS

Aprima's billing functions are even flexible enough to accommodate Next Generation's unusual financial arrangements. This practice does not file insurance claims or receive direct insurance payments. Instead, it charges a substantial fee for the annual exam, which covers labs, immunizations, health screenings and all the extra services such as 24-hour access and home visits. Sick visits are charged the Medicare price; office staff helps patients submit receipts and forms for insurance reimbursements. Such an arrangement requires a particularly adaptable PM system, and Aprima handles it effortlessly.

"I've been very happy with Aprima and the system," Dr. Cohen says. "Based on how responsive the company is, and the level of support they're giving, this system will be very powerful. I like the future of where Aprima is going."



APRIMA IS VISION

Aprima is a single application built on a single database. Most companies deploy separate EHR and PM databases; that adds complexity. Or they let separate EHR/PM applications share a database; that creates conflicts, such as when one application gets an upgrade. Don't be fooled by a common interface that masks two databases. Ask.

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