

Review of Optometric Business



EHR: Streamline Staff Work Flow, Improve Patient Care

By Michelle Cooper, OD

SYNOPSIS

Electronic health records systems can eliminate duplications and streamline the daily routines of your staff—letting you concentrate on improving patient care.

ACTION PLAN

IMPROVE DOCUMENTATION. Use EHR to ensure everything discussed and prescribed in exam room automatically is transferred to the optical.

REDUCE REDUNDANCIES. Avoid staff having to re-input information from the exam room or pre-testing.

SIMPLIFY FOLLOW-UP SCHEDULING. EHR systems document whether the patient needs a follow-up visit and how often they need to be seen.

Electronic health records (EHR) provide an opportunity to streamline your office operations, and, in the process, improve your patients' office visits. My practice implemented Eyefinity EHR this year, and we have found that both staff and patients appreciate the efficiencies we've realized as a result. My front desk employee is the first to log a patient into the EHR from the desktop. The patient chart is then accessed by the optical and technician via an iPad, and in the exam room by me, as well.

Improve Patient Care

The most important thing our EHR has done is it forces me as a doctor to think through each patient visit in a step-by-step and logical fashion. It helps me to explain to a patient all of his or her options for treatment and to consider all aspects of patient care.

Eyefinity EHR can be used on either a desktop or tablet. I prefer the tablet because it allows me to move throughout the office with all patient information literally at my fingertips!

Each diagnosis or impression in the system is associated with different plans and patient counseling options. When I select an impression on my iPad, the next screen will show me a list of plans associated with that diagnosis.

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- Mobile – 24/7 access via any tablet device, computer or laptop
- Patient Involvement – More face-to-face time with patients
- Practice Management Integration – Seamless integration with OfficeMate
- Streamline Workflows – Increase efficiencies in the office
- Compliance – HIPAA and ONC 2014 Edition certified to meeting Meaningful Use stages 1 and 2

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For example, if I select myopia, I may forget to mention LASIK as a possible plan had I used paper, but with my EHR, a prompt to mention LASIK is right in front of me on the tablet. Or, it reminds me to discuss IOL options with a cataract surgery patient because that option is listed under my patient plan and counseling on the EHR. The system is integrated so that no matter the method of data entry, the information is logged into the patient chart.

Also, specifically with the features provided by Eyefinity EHR, I can immediately see any possible drug interactions, quickly see a glaucoma patient's IOP history, or be alerted that a patient is diabetic, to name a few. So, both the doctor and the patient benefit.

Assess Daily Work Routines

My front office manager checks patients in and out. She also obtains insurance information and authorization. She will create the visit for each patient, as well as enter all the information from the patient history form into Eyefinity EHR on the desktop version. My technician pre-tests each patient and records the data on an iPad. My other technician assists patients with glasses and contact lenses and does glasses and contact lens ordering. The office manager files and posts all insurance, as well as edges lenses. However, because we are a small office, all staff is cross trained.

The EHR system is integrated with our practice management software so my office manager loves that all the coding is immediately transferred over, making insurance filing much easier. The front office loves being able to immediately send records on any referrals. Also, with Eyefinity EHR and e-prescribing, any Rx refill requests come right to the EHR saving time with faxes and telephone calls. My other technician has all the information on hand when ordering, so there is no ambiguity on glasses or contact lens prescriptions. Prior to using our EHR, I received numerous questions every day on what trial lenses needed to be ordered or what a certain illegible number was.

Eyefinity EHR has radically improved what I prescribe or recommend in the exam room and the coordination of care with other doctors and with pharmacies. I have two offices, and Eyefinity EHR has been an extremely vital asset. The ability to access patient records no matter my location, and the ability to review a patient's record regardless of which office they were seen in, has proved invaluable.

Eliminate Confusion and Redundancies

Electronic health records help my front office in several ways. For example, if a patient needs to schedule a follow up, I can indicate that on the record. There is no confusion regarding when he or she needs to come back or for what tests he or she is coming back. Eyefinity EHR also lets everyone know the status of each patient--whether they have been checked in, in the exam room, or checked out, as well as how long they have been waiting. This is tremendously helpful in maintaining a smooth patient flow. The process is just more efficient with Eyefinity EHR.

Train Staff to Realize Efficiencies

We first implemented EHR in 2010 at the insistence of my staff. I was quite reluctant and happy with my paper charts, but they managed to wear me down! We then upgraded to Eyefinity EHR earlier this year. My staff of five and I trained on the EHR through web-based modules provided by Eyefinity.

In addition, we had a main contact who was our implementation specialist and helped with any concerns and answered any questions. The training was all provided by Eyefinity as part of the system, so there was no additional charge. It's like anything else, it took getting used to, but the more I use it the more intuitive the whole program is. My staff has embraced Eyefinity EHR and is extremely happy and excited about the system.

Meet HIPAA Requirements: Give Staff Specific Levels of EHR Access

Each staff member is assigned his or her own unique user name and password. This enables different levels of access to the system. For example, with Eyefinity EHR I am obviously set up as the doctor. When I log into the system with my user name and password, I am the only one who can override procedure codes and finalize a record. Those tabs and options are not located on the patient chart for anyone else.

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Optometry school: University of Alabama-Birmingham, class of 1994

Practice founded: 1994

Locations: 2 in Greenville, SC

ODs: 1

Support staff: 5

Annual comprehensive exams: 2,000

Annual revenues: \$450,000