



Dragon Medical Group Health Cooperative Promotes Physician Adoption of EpicCare EMR and Achieves Higher Quality of Patient Care with Dragon Medical

Group Health Cooperative (GHC) is a consumer-governed, nonprofit healthcare system and health plan provider serving more than half a million patients in the Seattle, Washington area. GHC is comprised of 25 multi-specialty outpatient clinics staffed by 900 providers.

The mission of GHC is to transform healthcare by improving the care and well-being of patients. GHC clinicians have supported this objective by aggressively adopting Dragon® Medical from Nuance®. Using Dragon Medical, physician adoption of GHC's EpicCare EMR system has accelerated, confidence of coding has increased, and provider satisfaction has been enhanced. Additionally, transcription costs have plummeted, report quality has improved, and higher quality of patient care has been achieved.

EHR Implementation

In 2003, a rolling implementation of EpicCare EMR began throughout the clinics of GHC. Use of the EHR by physicians was mandated by GHC's administration and clinical leadership, but many providers were displeased with the cumbersome new documentation method they suddenly had to adopt. While EpicCare comes with a broad library of templates to document care, Dr. John Kaschko, Primary Care Physician, indicated that "Within the EHR, I had to type some notes and being a slow typist, it took way too long to complete them."

A handful of physicians experimented with Dragon Medical in hopes of attaining an easier method of clinical documentation. This experiment proved to be a resounding success, with a payback period of two months on the original licenses purchased.

Highlights

- 25 multi-specialty outpatient clinics staffed by 900 providers—all using EpicCare EMR
- 120 physicians currently using Dragon Medical
- Due to Dragon Medical, physician adoption of the EpicCare EMR system has accelerated
- Confidence of coding at maximum level of reimbursement has increased
- Provider satisfaction has been significantly enhanced
- Report quality has improved
- Higher quality of patient care has been achieved
- Using Dragon Medical to create clinical documentation promotes significant time savings
- Providers who are using Dragon Medical saw an 80% decrease in transcription costs, shaving off a substantial portion of the annual transcription bill, which traditionally topped \$3 million



**Dr. John Kaschko, Primary Care Physician,
Group Health Cooperative**

Further solidifying the decision process to select Dragon Medical, Dr. Kaschko mentioned, “Dragon Medical was the product that was out there. We spoke with other Epic clients who were having success with Dragon Medical and it really seemed to be the software of choice. Dragon Medical is the clear speech recognition industry leader.”

Not only did Dragon Medical have the ability to promote physician adoption of EpicCare by making the EHR easier to use, Dragon Medical also offered GHC the ability to shave off a substantial portion of their annual transcription bill, which traditionally topped \$3 million.

Dragon Medical Roll Out

Clinical and administrative management, with the strong support of the physician staff, initiated a health system-wide roll-out plan of Dragon Medical. The initial capital outlay of the project for the first batch of users was \$150,000.

Dragon Medical was acquired by GHC from a Nuance Gold Certified Channel Partner. This Partner initially offered consultation and needs analysis services. Once GHC decided to implement Dragon Medical, the Partner spearheaded project planning and implementation along with individual and organizational training. Going forward the Partner will offer GHC technical support services due to their extensive knowledge in deploying speech recognition to improve EHR use and adoption.

“... it really seemed to be the software of choice [for other Epic users]. Dragon Medical is the clear industry leader.”

Dragon Medical was rolled out to 120 physicians in June, 2007. According to Erika Fox, Primary Care Project Manager, “Some technical savvy providers loved it right away.” The ramp up period for physicians less comfortable with technology was fairly rapid as well. “All of my colleagues seemed to embrace Dragon Medical; acceptance really wasn’t an issue,” said Dr. Kaschko.

“Dragon Medical made the adoption of the EHR more comfortable for providers.”

Results: Faster EpicCare Adoption, High Quality Documentation, and Documentation Time Savings

Shortly after roll-out, Dragon Medical was being used for everything from office and urgent care encounters, to lab results and messages to other providers. Ultimately, “Dragon Medical made the adoption of the EHR more comfortable for providers,” said Dr. Kaschko. By allowing easy input of narrative, physicians are now able to efficiently complete patient notes. Most significant benefits are attained in sections in which the physician thought process can be captured such as the history of present illness, assessment and plan.

Dragon Medical has clearly enhanced the quality of reporting by facilitating complete documentation in one sitting

“Dragon Medical has really shortened the process of creating notes. It shortens my day by 1–1.5 hours because I no longer have to log in from home to complete charts.”

and, ultimately, enhancing quality of patient care. “With transcription, I wouldn’t see notes for authentication for a couple days. At that point I could only review for grammar, not accuracy of content,” said Dr. Kaschko. Using Dragon Medical, clinical accuracy of notes is now extremely high because physicians review their notes and sign off immediately while the details of an encounter are still fresh in their minds.

Shortly after ramp-up, Fox conducted a follow-up survey to all Dragon Medical users and found 97% of all users would recommend Dragon Medical to another provider. Furthermore, providers indicated that using Dragon Medical to create clinical documentation promotes significant time savings per day.

Providers are able to finish their work faster, allowing them to leave the office earlier if they choose or spend more time with patients. “Dragon Medical has really shortened the process of creating notes. It shortens my day by 1–1.5 hours because I no longer have to log in from home to complete charts,” said Dr. Dean Carr, Primary Care Physician.

“The complete documentation facilitated by Dragon Medical allows me to now code more at a level 4 as opposed to level 3.”

Challenge: To enhance adoption of GHC’s EpicCare EMR by offering a way to efficiently input narrative into clinical notes; while decreasing transcription costs, enhancing physician satisfaction, and promoting quality patient care.

Solution: Roll out Dragon Medical health system-wide.

Results: Currently, 120 providers use Dragon Medical to enter notes directly into their EpicCare EMR. Dragon Medical has: accelerated physician adoption of EpicCare, increased confidence of coding at the maximum level of reimbursement, enhanced provider satisfaction, improved report quality, promoted quality of patient care, enabled documentation time savings, and facilitated significant transcription cost savings.

Dragon Medical Increases the Confidence to Code at Maximum Level of Reimbursement

Economically, Dragon Medical has significantly contributed to GHC. There has been a noticeable increase in the confidence of coding and billing levels, with higher RVUs for providers. “The complete documentation facilitated by Dragon Medical allows me to now code more at a level 4 as opposed to level 3,” stated Dr. Kaschko. Additionally, providers who are using Dragon Medical saw an 80% decrease in transcription costs, equating to substantial cost savings.

Dr. Kaschko summed up the success of Dragon Medical, “Physicians don’t have a choice to use the EHR – it’s mandatory, but this offers them a much easier way to document the entire story.”

Ease of Use

With Dragon Medical, providers can completely eliminate the need to enter information via keyboard. Dragon Medical also affords users the ability to navigate EHRs via voice commands. A single voice command can be used to insert large text blocks as well as to initiate a sequence of events. “I often use my voice to trigger a command in Epic which pulls in labs info—with a single command,” said Kaschko.

Dragon Medical has also improved physician satisfaction—a critical predictor of clinician retention and a measure often driven down by EHR deployments. Dr. Kaschko points out



“When they type, the physicians are as brief as possible. Dragon Medical eliminates the brevity.”

in regards to using Dragon Medical that, “It’s fun! It makes a tedious task more enjoyable.”

Physicians feel better about the higher quality notes they are able to produce with Dragon Medical. “We can do a better job in the same amount of time,” said Kaschko. Physicians are able to create richer clinical notes than if they were keyboarding into the EHR. “When they type, the physicians are as brief as possible. Dragon Medical eliminates the brevity,” added Fox.

Since notes created via Dragon Medical are available immediately within the EHR, there is no lag time in waiting for notes to come back to a provider from transcription. Therefore, all pertinent information can be shared across the network of providers in real-time. This definitely enhances quality of patient care because all providers can have notes at their finger tips while administering care to patients.

As an added bonus, occupational health issues which led to a desire for an alternative to transcribing were combated with Dragon Medical. Now, those kinds of injuries are far less at GHC. Dr. Jeffrey Gelgisser, Primary Care Physician, experienced Carpel Tunnel Syndrome first-hand from incessant keyboarding pre-Dragon Medical and commented, “It made a huge difference being able to use Dragon Medical.”

The positive sentiment among the physicians at GHC is evident, “I don’t know anyone who has used Dragon

Medical who would stop using it,” said Dr. Carr. “Other doctors are chomping at the bit for the opportunity to use it,” added Dr. Gelgisser.

Plausible Expansion

Currently, there are over 80 providers poised to adopt Dragon Medical. GHC is waiting for funding before adding these users, but Dr. Kaschko is confident that the investment will be well worth the return. He predicts that eventually 2/3 of all 900 providers at GHC will become avid Dragon Medical users.

For product information please visit Nuance Healthcare at www.nuance.com/healthcare or call 866-748-9537.

© 2009 Nuance Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. Nuance, the Nuance logo and Dragon are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Nuance Communications, Inc., and/or its subsidiaries in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are properties of their respective owners.

The experience speaks for itself™