



Significant IT Upgrades Enhance Practice Efficiency

*QualDerm IT Department Successfully Manages
Network-wide EMR and Practice Management System
Conversion from Planning to Ongoing Support*

It's been over a decade since the Federal Government passed the HITECH Act requiring providers to digitize their medical charts. Since then, there have been other mandates further pushing the use of electronic medical records (EMR). The reason behind these initiatives was to make healthcare records more accurate and accessible to patients.

Despite the financial incentives and penalties, the uptake on converting paper records was initially slow. However, as most aspects of daily life have transitioned to the digital world, EMRs and practice management systems have now become necessary tools for modern medical practices. Recently, to enhance efficiencies, QualDerm rolled out a network-wide EMR and practice management system conversion.

According to Josh Metzger, QualDerm's Vice President of IT and Security, "The driving force behind this conversion was to improve efficiency and make our partner physicians' lives easier. Plus, some of our practices had aging infrastructure and this allowed us to move to a cloud-based system."

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Research & Planning

The QualDerm IT team spent 6 months vetting multiple technology vendors before choosing the ModMed practice management system and EMA[®] EMR. Further, due to the size of QualDerm's network, the company was able to negotiate much more favorable pricing. Typically, this process takes an independent practice at least a year.

As part of its research, the QualDerm IT team did internal studies of its practices' current systems.

"The practices using ModMed seemed much quieter than the others. I felt like that was due to the system – it wasn't in the way and reduced the complexity of the practice," says Metzger. "Plus, the medical assistant (MA) to physician ratio was better in the ModMed practices because they didn't need as much help with documentation. This system allowed the physicians to do more during the patient visit than other systems."

Once the decision to go with ModMed/EMA was made, the QualDerm IT team began the arduous task of planning the implementation. Because each practice is unique, the IT team mapped out configuration and workflow plans to meet the individual needs of each practice.

Dr. Michael Duffey, who practices at Barret & Geiss Dermatology, a QualDerm-affiliated practice in Ohio, appreciated the customized approach for the conversion.

"Flexibility is a strong point of our QualDerm leadership," he says. "They look at a problem and find the best solution for all rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach."

Dr. Duffey appreciated having a dedicated IT team to manage this process. “Our IT department did all the work,” he says. “They took that work off my desk, and I didn’t have to worry about it. This saved me so many headaches.”

Implementation & Training

QualDerm provides a dedicated team experienced in both IT and healthcare. In fact, each team member has vast EMR implementation experience. This experience is unique and important according to Metzger. “General IT groups wouldn’t be able to navigate an EMR and practice management system implementation as well,” he says.

For example, the QualDerm IT team understands the intricacies of a practice’s workflow. That’s why the team worked with providers to reduce their schedules during the implementation period and then gradually ramp the schedules back up after the go-live. This allowed for a smoother transition and helped the practices’ staffs get comfortable with the new systems in real-time.

Two weeks before go-live, the staff received training from both the QualDerm IT team and ModMed. These training sessions were a combination of onsite and online. Further, both the QualDerm and ModMed teams provided onsite assistance on the go-live day and stayed at each practice for several days after to provide ongoing support.

Lori Tysinger, Practice Supervisor at Dermatology of Southeastern Ohio, says QualDerm’s support extended beyond the IT staff.

“Our Regional Vice President, Brooke Lyons, made herself available throughout the entire process. She distributed FAQs, tip sheets and organized several meetings to touch base with all offices,” says Tysinger. “Those resources were the best way to keep all our offices on the same page, and gave us the opportunity to share issues, concerns and tips to work through everything together.”

Tysinger continues, “After the go-live, there were some minor kinks. However, the QualDerm IT team helped us work through those issues, supporting us all along the way.”

Dr. Duffey agrees. “I’ve gone through other technology integrations previously, so anticipated some difficulties,” he says. “This process was much smoother than what we went through before partnering with QualDerm. We were more prepared and the internal support from the IT department was a significant benefit.”

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Michael Duffey, MD
Barret & Geiss Dermatology

Efficiency & Integration

The new systems benefit both the providers and the patients. Paper patient forms have been completely eliminated, which speeds up the intake process considerably and has the potential to reduce patient wait times. The systems also help improve the billing and coding process as well as enhance communications among referring providers.

“In my opinion, one of the greatest strengths of this implementation has been the integration with other practices within our network,” says Dr. Duffey. “Now, we’re able to better streamline care because we’re able to more easily share patient notes and photos.”

Dr. Duffey also acknowledges other efficiencies gained from the new systems, “There has been an increase in speed for my staff due to things such as prescription integration and billing and coding.”

According to Tysinger, prior to the implementation sharing records with other practices was complicated, and the new paperless process creates a smoother patient visit from check in to check out.

“The flow from the front desk to the exam room definitely improved,” she says. “At first, the implementation process seemed scary, but it was worth it. The IT team has been phenomenal.”

Having a dedicated IT team is one of the many benefits of partnering with a quality-driven practice management organization.

“My team wakes up every day thinking about technology within dermatology offices. All we do is practice IT,” says Metzger. “The physicians used to have to worry about this. But after they affiliate with QualDerm, they don’t have to anymore. Instead, they can focus on patient care.”

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Dermatology of Southeastern Ohio

About QualDerm Partners

QualDerm Partners helps top-tier dermatologists position their practices for sustainable growth and profitability. The company creates market-leading practice partnerships through affiliations and de novo development. QualDerm provides the management support, capital, and guidance for growth. Under QualDerm’s True PartnershipSM model, physicians are partners, not employees, and retain their own practice brand. This doctor-driven model is designed to maintain physicians’ clinical autonomy and ensure the highest-quality patient care. QualDerm offers physicians tailored partnership structures to meet their needs, as well as the option to sell their practices.

QualDerm currently has 64 affiliated practices in North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, with plans to expand further. For more information, visit www.QualDerm.com.

Contact QualDerm to learn more about partnership opportunities or to discuss selling your practice.

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