



MEDFUSION CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Women's Health Alliance pka Capital Area OB/GYN

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Raleigh and Cary, North Carolina

8 physicians

1 nurse practitioner

www.capitalareaobgyn.com

PRODUCTS/SERVICES

- Pre-Registration
- Health History Forms
- Prescription Renewals
- Appointment Requests
- Online Bill Pay
- Ask a Question
- Website development

“Online bill payment is a huge time savings and has increased our bottom line; we have increased our patient collections by about \$8,000 more each month. We receive payments much faster from patients and it goes into our merchant account within 24-hours.”

Medfusion's online patient portal enables a specialty OB/GYN practice to drastically improve patient access, increase patient collections and simplify office workflows

Chasing down no shows. Collecting patient payments. Time consuming manual processes. Capital Area OB/GYN, a nine-provider practice serving two locations in the Raleigh, NC area, was inundated with these challenges and more. Seeing as many as 3,200 patients per month, this practice struggled with receiving timely patient payments, long patient hold times, an inefficient registration process, and increasing phone volume. They partnered with Medfusion to alleviate routine phone calls, provide alternative access to patients and streamline their back office and clinical tasks.

Capital Area OB/GYN was receiving over 1000 incoming patient calls during office hours on their busiest days. Patients would be left on hold in excess of thirty minutes to leave messages, or worse, abandon their phone calls with their questions left unanswered. Staff would return patient calls, but patients weren't receiving answers when they needed them and the staff was interrupted from their workday. “Many women consider their obstetrician/gynecologist as their primary physician; it was imperative that our patients were able to reach us when they needed us,” said Cynthia Suggs, Practice Administrator.

Another inefficient process was the long manual method of collecting patient payments. Staff would prepare, print and mail billing statements, which would go unanswered. Billing clerks would have to call the patient about the balance due, often creating back-and-forth “phone tag” answering questions about the billing statement with the patient. In some cases, staff would need to engage a collection agency to collect the outstanding patient payment. This process was very labor-intensive, time-consuming and resulted in loss of revenue for services rendered. Capital Area OB/GYN knew Medfusion could address their ineffective office procedures and improve patient communication.

Having implemented a practice management solution (PM) in early 2006 and electronic medical records (EMR) in late 2008, one of their goals was to utilize a solution that would seamlessly integrate with their PM and EMR with a click of a button. “We wanted something that could work with our systems and we felt that Medfusion could help us achieve our goals and address our challenges,” says Suggs. With over 90% of their patients

having internet access, and over 75% of their patients being technologically savvy, it was clear that an established web presence would be adopted easily by patients.

Medfusion roll-out was a smooth success

Medfusion, which provides enhanced patient-provider communication solutions, started development of a customized website that included pertinent patient education, unlimited pages and could be easily edited with self-managed content. The secure, HIPAA-compliant patient portal was seamlessly integrated in the newly-designed website. "We loved having a one-to-one contact person all the way through design, set up, and training; the entire implementation went smoothly," says Suggs. "My only regret is not implementing a patient portal sooner."

Patients can now log on to Capital Area OB/GYN's website to request an appointment, pay their bill or ask billing questions, ask a nurse a question, pre-register and complete their health forms. Their patient-provider communications have been so successful that they recently added lab results delivery, the referral portal and prescription renewals to their patient portal to further enhance office efficiencies.

Patient communication solutions streamline processes

When patients have questions, they now log in to the patient portal and initiate an unstructured communication that is routed to the appropriate person, either the billing department or the clinical staff. Staff can prioritize their day and designate a certain time to send responses and patients receive a reply faster than if they left a phone message.

The appointment request and pre-registration processes have also been improved. Now, patients log in to the patient portal to initiate a request for an appointment by designating a specific provider, time of day, or day of the week. Staff can easily process these requests at a chosen time during their day and even send appointment reminders back to the patient to reduce no shows.

The registration process is much more streamlined as patients are instructed to log in to complete their pre-registration and health forms. An interface between the patient portal and PM allows demographic information to automatically populate designated fields in their PM system and by the first of the year their health forms will be added to the patient chart in their EMR. "It is so easy, one click of the button allows the patient data to migrate into our PM," states Cynthia Suggs. "It is totally automated."

The bill payment process has also been transformed through the patient portal. Now, patients receive their bill and log in to the patient portal to pay the balance or ask questions about their statement or balance. A budget payment plan can be set up with automated recurring payments, creating convenience for patients and easing the collection process for staff. The patient payment is automatically deposited into the practice's merchant account. "I love that patient payments are directly deposited into my merchant account; that is a huge value add for our practice, the patients submit their payment and within twenty-four hours it is posted to our account."

Marketing is essential to practice strategy

As part of Capital Area OB/GYN's roll-out strategy, marketing their patient portal was a key component in their success. "Marketing our patient portal to both our staff and our patients is essential for our success. We don't give our patients another option; it is our primary communication tool," says Suggs. Prior to an appointment, a patient is instructed to log in to the patient portal to complete the mandatory pre-registration and health history forms. "There is no option to receive mailed forms to complete; this saves us printing, mailing and postage costs."

In addition to educating patients about their patient portal with each phone and in-person encounter, they have a message on their phone system directing patients to the patient portal for routine questions. There are flyers in the front office, lab and each patient exam room that contain the practice URL to notify patients that they can interact with the practice online. On all mailed patient communication, including billing statements, the URL is added along with instructions on how patients can pay their bill online and access the other online solutions.

Overwhelming positive response with Medfusion

Since implementing Medfusion's patient portal, the response has been overwhelming. Patient online transactions are dramatically increasing each month, and there has been a positive impact to the front, back and clinical offices. In the front office, each patient touch-point has been improved. The appointment request and ask a staff feature have drastically reduced phone volume. "In the past, we used to get upwards of 1000 patient calls on our busiest days; the number of routine incoming calls has decreased by over 80%. This allows patients who have an emergency or an urgent question to reach us right away," says Suggs. The reduced phone call volume has also led to more manageable

patient hold times; patients are now waiting less than five minutes, an 83% decrease, due to an automated message directing patients to their website. Capital Area OB/GYN has also reduced the number of no-shows due to the automated appointment reminders they send out through the patient portal. "We used to have ten to twenty patient no-shows per week which resulted in a substantial loss of revenue. By utilizing the patient portal we have only one or two patient no-shows a week," declares Cynthia Suggs.

The registration process has also been significantly streamlined. Patients complete the forms online more completely and accurately in the privacy of their homes where they have access to more information. Long patient forms have been reduced from twelve pages to three, and now provide information in the precise order the physicians want questions asked. Waiting room time has also decreased to five to ten minutes. They have even reduced one FTE staff due to their high patient utilization of their patient portal; they average over 300 appointment requests and 1300 patient forms completed monthly.

The billing office and clinical office have also seen a significant impact. The bill payment process is much more streamlined and the billing staff can focus on more important tasks other than making repeated phone calls to collect patient payments. They now receive up to \$8000 more in patient payments per month, receiving an average of \$500-2000 each day online. "Online bill payment is a huge time savings and has increased our bottom line; we have increased our patient collections by about \$8,000 more each month. We receive payments much faster from patients and we are also saving over \$700 a month in postage," says Suggs. In the clinical office, fifteen minutes spent on each patient question over the phone has been cut to under two minutes responding through the secure patient portal.

Overall, Capital Area OB/GYN is very pleased with the success of their patient portal and is looking forward to continued expansion of their patient communication platform. "The biggest benefit of our patient portal is that we are able to see an additional 40-50 patients per month," states Suggs. So what does the future hold for patient portals? "I think there are several factors that prioritize the importance of implementing a patient portal now: the financial incentives from the administration, the simplicity to implement and the low barrier to entry."