

Doctors May·Grant and Lancaster General Health Achieve Standards-Based Interoperability and Care Coordination with Greenway and Epic EHRs

Key benefits/outcomes

- Higher-quality, better-coordinated, safer care
- Improved collaboration between hospital and practice
- Greater efficiency
- Improved referrals
- Improved revenue
- Compliance with mandates
- Improved communication with patients
- Decreased liability
- Greater patient satisfaction
- On the road to MU Stage 2

Solutions featured

PrimeSUITE
PrimePATIENT



With 33 providers and six locations, Doctors May·Grant Associates is made up of a team of dedicated physicians, midwives and nurse practitioners who take great pride in providing the greatest quality healthcare to women of all ages.

For over 30 years, Doctors May·Grant Associates has been the most highly regarded OB/GYN practice in the Lancaster, PA area.

<http://maygrant.com>

Lancaster General Health

Lancaster General Health is a not-for-profit community health system with a comprehensive network of care encompassing Lancaster General Hospital, Lancaster Rehabilitation Hospital, and Women & Babies Hospital, which includes a Level III-B Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. LG Health has been designated a Magnet hospital for its nursing excellence.

www.lancastergeneralhealth.org

Challenge

Doctors May·Grant Associates and **Lancaster General Health** share a large number of patients and a mountain of data. Each year, 2,500 May·Grant patients deliver at the 98-bed community health system's Women & Babies Hospital, and each patient generates records of care received before, during and after each hospitalization.



Both May·Grant and LG Health were happy with their electronic health records (EHRs). May·Grant implemented Greenway® PrimeSUITE® in 2009 and the hospital used Epic Systems' EpicCare. "We spent 18 months selecting Greenway and firmly believe we have the best product for our practice," said *Mona S. Engle*, RN, chief executive officer (above left). To better serve its May·Grant patients, LG Health installed a computer running PrimeSUITE in its triage department. Providers

could log on to access patients' prenatal records, but the arrangement was far from perfect.

"Someone always had to go to triage, extract the information and print out the prenatal record," said *Terri L. Rapp*, MD (below left). "Providers want all the information at their fingertips with as few clicks as possible."

May·Grant and LG Health recognized that maintaining two separate patient records drained valuable staff resources and undermined quality. To deliver optimal care, clinicians at the hospital needed easy access to prenatal records and clinicians at May·Grant needed to know what went on in the hospital when patients returned for follow-up care.

"We wanted caregivers to have the most accurate, up-to-date information for every patient, whether they were in the office or the hospital," Engle said.

Solution

In March 2012, May·Grant and LG Health committed to an ambitious project. Through extensive collaboration, the two organizations would exchange real-time patient information between the organizations' independent EHRs.

"As we look at the ever-changing healthcare landscape, we have to be as aggressive as we can," Engle said. "Interoperability helps us prepare for health information exchanges and comply with meaningful use, but it's also the best standard of care for the patient."



The project was planned in phases. In phase one, which went live in September 2012, the Greenway and Epic systems exchange Continuity of Care Documents (CCDs) with patient allergies, medications with dosages, problem lists, and lab results. Future phases of the project will bring increasing levels of automation in how discrete information is exchanged between the Greenway and Epic EHRs. According to LG Health's chief medical information officer, *Michael Ripchinski*, MD, "We're moving from convenience now to really improving care for patients."

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Terri L. Rapp, MD
Doctors May-Grant Associates

Results



May-Grant and LG Health have introduced standards-based interoperability while maintaining their existing EHR systems, which has been good for physician satisfaction. “I love Greenway for the office and Epic is very powerful for hospital documentation,” Dr. Rapp stated. “Now that the two systems can exchange CCDs, we’re getting a good combined snapshot of the patient record.” The two organizations have also enjoyed several other benefits:

Higher-quality, safer care — Even in its first phase, the positive impact of standards-based interoperability on quality and safety is clear. “Being able to get the most updated patient information helps providers care for patients in the best way possible,” Dr. Rapp noted. Physicians can make informed care decisions and avoid complications such as allergic reactions or dangerous medication interactions.

Greater efficiency — “It certainly makes you more efficient as a provider when you can click on one document to look at previous visits and allergies,” Dr. Rapp said. Because physicians can spend less time on clerical aspects of patient admissions, they have more time to spend with patients. Further, efficiencies at admission improve efficiencies throughout the hospital — from beds to staffing. “It all flows from physicians being able to quickly understand what is going on with the patient.”

Improved referrals — With the Greenway and Epic systems sharing information, many of the obstacles that made referrals burdensome and time consuming have gone away. “It’s so much easier to refer a patient when physicians can open the referring provider’s notes and not have to wait for a fax,” Engle said. As Dr. Ripchinski noted, LG Health has over 600 medical staff members using Epic in their practices, and now May-Grant can exchange real-time patient information with any provider in that network.

Improved medication reconciliation — Before interoperability, providers at LG Health often found themselves in the uncomfortable position of treating May-Grant patients without knowing their medication histories. “Physicians were making decisions without a complete set of data,” Dr. Ripchinski said. Now, as patients move from one facility to another, providers can reconcile medications at each stage of transition. “Interoperability makes it easier to get a complete medication list without calling the office or waiting for someone to fax over the list,” he noted.

Improved revenue — Interoperability has also improved May-Grant’s practice management and revenue cycle management processes, particularly when a hospital patient is assigned to the practice for follow-up care. “Now we’re able to get all of the details we need to process claims on behalf of those new patients, such as address, phone number and health and billing information,” CEO Engle said. The expediency extends to existing May-Grant patients as well. “Since we can query the hospital for the information we need to submit with a claim, searching that information no longer slows us down.”

Compliance with mandates — As pioneers in HIE implementation, May-Grant and LG Health are well-positioned to comply with current and future directives of healthcare reform. “We already have two totally independent systems able to talk to each other,” Engle said. “As the federal government mandates things, we’ll be ready to move to the next stages.”

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Michael Ripchinski, MD
Chief Medical Information Officer
Lancaster General Health

Dr. Ripchinski agreed. “Greenway has been great to work with — it’s been very progressive in working to achieve the goal of interoperable patient records. We’re very fortunate that Epic and Greenway are so willing to collaborate toward this standard; some other vendors represented in our community haven’t been so inclined.”

Improved communication with patients — May-Grant is also using the integrated Greenway consumer-engagement portal, PrimePATIENT[®], to enhance interoperability and comply with meaningful use. When patients enter information on past surgeries and other medical information, that information is added to the patient’s facesheet, where the hospital team can access it as needed. The portal also asks for patients’ preferred form of communication, information that enables May-Grant to send reminders in compliance with Stage 2 meaningful use.

Decreased liability — Engle believes that by achieving standards-based interoperability, May-Grant and LG Health have reduced liability risk. “In a crisis situation, the provider might not have time to look in two systems.” Now caregivers in both locations can quickly open the chart and see complete patient information in one place. “You can read notes, you can see clinical benchmarks. We are in a much better position to catch the things we need to catch.”

Stronger connection — Working together to establish interoperability has strengthened the working relationship between May-Grant and LG Health. “There’s an increased acknowledgement of the value that each group brings to the table,” Engle noted. As the interoperability project continues into phases two and three and more staff see it in action, she expects the connection between the two organizations will become even stronger.

Teamwork critical to success — Looking back on what their organization has accomplished so far, Dr. Rapp praised the teamwork that was critical to the project’s success. “Projects like this require a few people to champion it, and we’ve had that on all sides. Greenway’s visibility in health IT and commitment to be innovative has made a big difference.” Engle concurred. “Had we not had the buy-in and leadership from Greenway, the project wouldn’t have happened.”

Learn more...

about how Greenway customers are using our solutions to coordinate and improve cost-effective, high-quality care. See our website at www.greenwayhealth.com or email us at info@greenwayhealth.com.