

# Old-school care by way of high-tech tools



Medical Colleagues of Texas, an independent practice with specialties from primary care to pulmonary disease to OB-GYN, has been in business for 35 years, but its history goes back more than 100 years. Members of the practice's staff descend from caregivers who have practiced in the Houston area since 1906. Needless to say, the practice has deep roots in the traditional style of patient care.

"Our group and our physicians embody that old-school style of medicine where the patient relationship comes first," said Practice Administrator Ethan Bing. "Maintaining that tradition keeps the physicians happy, which keeps the staff very happy, which keeps patients happy."

In 2008, Medical Colleagues of Texas adopted the Greenway Health Intergy platform for EHR and practice management. Bing described Greenway not as a vendor, but as a partner. "It starts with the foundation of trust," he said. "The relationship starts with a solid product, follows with a committed support team, and wraps up nicely with a responsive sales and administrative staff. The product speaks for itself. It really works for us."

Bing said he was equally impressed with Intergy support. "Customer support has been absolutely incredible since I started working here six years ago. They're always available and well trained to get the job done. When you have a product that works and having a team that can help you, there's not much to complain about."

## A unified system for maximum efficiency

With the many tools built into the Intergy system, Medical Colleagues of Texas runs its

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—Ethan Bing, practice administrator,  
Medical Colleagues of Texas

business through the platform, freed from the inefficiencies caused by switching between multiple programs or from the need to seek new tools to accomplish additional tasks or accommodate growth.

"It not only does what an EHR does, which is track patients' health records," Bing said, "but it lets us run our business optimally, everything from our operational to financial tools are packed into Intergy."

Growth has been a major focus for this practice, which has grown at a rate of about one doctor per year, and Intergy has allowed it to scale accordingly. Templates, processes, and workflows are shared as new doctors come on board, maximizing efficiencies and minimizing the time it takes to get them up to speed quickly.

"Intergy also allows the doctors and the staff to customize the workflows to the degree that makes sense for them," Bing said. "We provide the backbone, but it's easy for them to make modifications to better suit their working style and patient population."

The practice administrative staff benefit from the fact that the Intergy EHR can be distinct from the practice management software. Staff can view items such as a patient's appointments, medications, and lab orders without getting lost in the weeds of a clinical user interface.

"Similarly, on the EHR side, doctors can peek into the scheduling information without going through a robust appointment scheduler that presents more information than they need," Bing said.

Bing estimated that running the practice through the single Intergy system based on established workflows and templates nets efficiency gains of about 20%. As a case-in-point, he mentioned a physician who had seen as few as six patients per day at his previous practice. After joining Medical Colleagues of Texas and adopting the Intergy system, his patient load has more than tripled.

## Clinical transparency through analytics

Intergy's robust practice analytics capabilities provide Bing with data to support the group's decision-making.

"It does take a bit of time to get the analytics platform under your belt, but once you do it's fairly easy to get the information you need," he said. "Which would you prefer — a reporting tool with a bit of a learning curve that gives you everything you need, or a stand-in reporting piece that offers limited actionable data?"

Medical Colleagues of Texas uses Practice Analytics data to manage population health, identifying patients it can further help by providing proactive versus reactive care.

## Key outcomes

- 20% increase in practice efficiency
- Reduced patient wait times
- Improved patient retention

The practice has found that tracking and reporting on patient care and outcomes contributes to its financial health. When it comes to value-based care, accurate data determines financial reimbursement.

## Putting patients first

A specific point of pride has been the reduction in patient wait times.

"Our average patient wait times were close to 45 minutes to an hour," Bing said. "We've gotten that down close to 15 to 20 minutes."

This has reduced patient turnover. Bing said the practice used to receive calls from patients upset about wait times who indicated they would find another doctor, but now such complaints are rare.

"Patients are coming and sticking," he said.

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