



CASE STUDY BUNDLE

Strategic Insights from Five Practice Leaders

Stability, growth, and success in a new era of eye care

Table of Contents

Loden Vision Centers Takes Hold of Its Financial Future	3
How Palmetto Retina Center Gets 95% of Claims Paid within 60 Days	6
Eye Specialty Group Takes Control of Its Future.....	9
Eye Center South Conquers a Mountain of Transcriptions.....	14

These case studies reveal how leaders from five ophthalmic practices addressed common challenges in contemporary eye care. Insights from their experiences may help you better manage your revenue cycle, maintain independence in a consolidating marketplace, or deal with overwhelming documentation requirements.

Discover how your peers handled situations all too familiar in running a practice.



Loden Vision Centers Takes Hold of Its Financial Future

THE CHALLENGE

When Matthew Pierre joined Loden Vision Centers as CEO, he had already been talking to the practice's founder, Dr. James Loden, for several months. They spoke about the need to get a better grasp on financial issues that challenged the practice. One item especially bothered Pierre. He wasn't getting straightforward information from an outsourced revenue cycle management (RCM) vendor that managed billing.

"We were having some really big surgery days," Pierre recalled. "Six-figure surgery days—hundred-thousand-dollar-plus days thanks to LASIK eye surgery—but our bank accounts weren't moving. Plus, we weren't getting answers. We didn't have insight into the billing process or our data and metrics."

In the midst of these cash flow concerns, the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, making for a very stressful time.

An overlooked aspect of medical practice

"We have outstanding clinical providers—leaders in their field who deliver excellent patient care. However, the business management side of the practice had been overlooked," Pierre explained. "Even if all the dollars weren't coming in, our providers were still doing very well—having big surgery days. This overshadowed inadequate processes in the front and back office."

Pierre knew they couldn't be successful long term without both the clinical team and the business team working efficiently. They needed to make changes quickly and provided their RCM vendor at the time every opportunity to improve the situation.

Decision point

The same concerns—such as inappropriate billing practices and failure to receive payment for retina drugs—continued to plague the practice. Pierre faced a decision—switch to a full internal billing team or fully outsource services to another vendor.

Before they outsourced RCM, Loden Vision Centers had its own billing team. Remnants of this team remained at the practice and continued to perform billing duties. Pierre realized success would require a strong leader: a revenue cycle rock star and an expert biller who was familiar with both the NextGen Enterprise platform and ophthalmology practice.

The labor market was tight. A headhunter's fee would be costly. And there was a question of time. It would likely take at least four to five months before Loden Vision Centers could bring on a new internal leader.

"I didn't have four to five months to achieve results," said Pierre.

He realized outsourcing was the best option. The question became: Which RCM service provider offered the strongest partnership?

CLIENT PROFILE

Loden Vision Centers

- In the business of providing eye care for more than 20 years
- Practice areas include LASIK eye surgery, cataract surgery, retina care, and all general vision and ophthalmic needs
- Serves five locations in Tennessee, with a focus on the Nashville metro area
- Clinical staff includes five ophthalmologists, four optometrists, and one physician assistant

NEXTGEN HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS

- NextGen® RCM Services
- The NextGen® Financial Analytics app

RESULTS

Results for Loden Vision Centers after partnering with NextGen Healthcare RCM

32% Increase in payments
from the previous 12-month average

16% Decrease in A/R days
from June 2020

69% Decrease in bill lag
from June 2020

28% Decrease in payment lag
from April 2020

THE SOLUTION

Fresh look at the vendor landscape

Loden Vision Centers was already using the NextGen Enterprise platform. Now it was time for a fresh look at the RCM vendor landscape. Matthew did a number of reference checks and began to narrow down his list. He received excellent references for NextGen RCM Services from practices in ophthalmology and other specialties.

“We needed to fix billing moving forward. We also had a lot of historical dollars left on the table,” said Pierre. “I realized if we signed up with NextGen Healthcare, and began working with their team, we could chase those dollars, especially Medicare dollars going back a year.”

Pierre met with a director from NextGen Healthcare’s team who was visiting Nashville.

“I told her I recently joined Loden Vision Centers. I felt like I was running blind. I didn’t have any data. I didn’t have insight into the business or any analytics.”

The NextGen Healthcare RCM director responded by taking out her smartphone and showing him the NextGen Financial Analytics app. This app makes detailed business analytics readily available, literally in the palm of your hand.

“When I saw that,” said Pierre, “the decision was made.”

THE BENEFITS

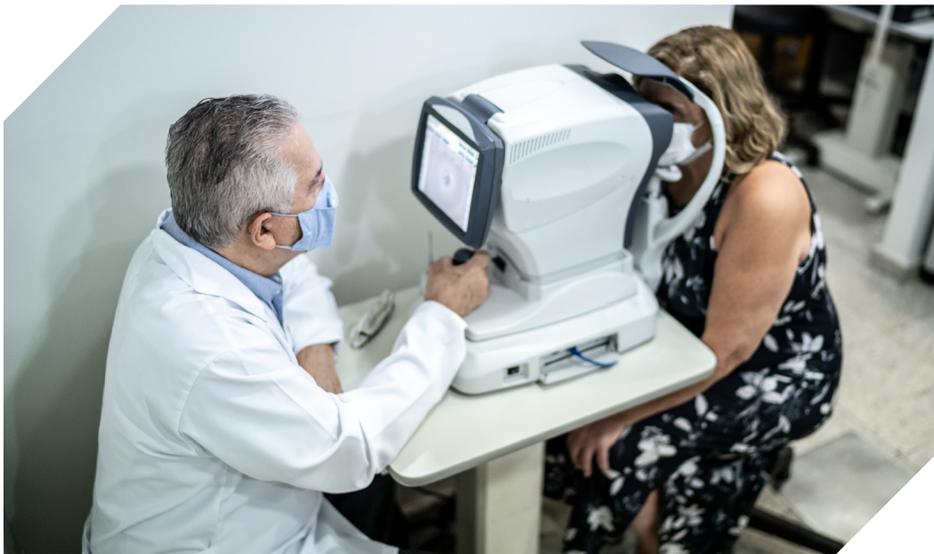
Loden Vision Centers joined forces with NextGen RCM Services in May 2020. According to Pierre, “We were in a dire situation. We needed help. NextGen RCM Services moved very quickly.”

By June, payments were significantly higher compared to the previous twelve-month average. Other metrics, such as billing lag, payment lag, and days in A/R began to improve.

“The biggest change is we now have insight into our own metrics,” Pierre explained. “We track metrics such as number of encounters, amount of charges, and collections on a daily basis. We can drill down by provider or location and look at any RCM data point.”

“We needed to fix billing moving forward. We also had a lot of historical dollars left on the table. I realized if we signed up with NextGen Healthcare, and began working with their team, we could chase those dollars, especially Medicare dollars going back a year.”

Matthew Pierre
Chief Executive Officer
Loden Vision Centers



Billing and beyond

Pierre emphasized that NextGen Healthcare’s RCM team is a partner. This partnership extends to helping identify where business process changes are needed—and how to implement a better strategy.

“One area we had difficulty was billing for retina drugs. In ophthalmology practice, if you’re not getting appropriate payment for injections, it becomes costly very quickly and can threaten your business. NextGen RCM Services helped us get retina billing on track.

“As another example—we now can review evaluation and management (E/M) codes for new and established patients using dashboards and tools. This helps us understand how to train providers to document charges and how to bill more accurately.”

Billing practices are only part of the story. Access to data is the foundation for improving many aspects of the business.

“We have five locations,” said Pierre. “We can look at encounters and collections per location. Are the number of patients and amount of collections at each location enough to offset overhead and labor costs? Where should we expand? Access to data empowers us to answer these questions.”

In another example, Loden Vision Centers markets LASIK services in certain geographic locations. Financial analytics accessed through dashboards enables the practice to determine the effectiveness of these efforts.

“There’s so much opportunity,” said Pierre in summary, “the strategic possibilities created by using NextGen Healthcare’s RCM tools are endless.”

“NextGen RCM Services are the backbone of our ability to capitalize on the care our providers deliver to patients. We now bill immediately. The RCM team helps us capture old A/R . We’re seeing the dollars come in.”

Matthew Pierre
Chief Executive Officer
Loden Vision Centers

How Palmetto Retina Center Gets 95% of Claims Paid within 60 Days

THE CHALLENGE

Decline in collections calls for a change

When David Gavin became CEO of Palmetto Retina Center, he quickly became aware of issues with billing and collections. Especially concerning—a slowdown in reimbursement for medications.

Timely reimbursement of medications is necessary to sustain a retina practice. Otherwise, the practice must pay for costly intravitreal injections, corticosteroids, anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (anti-VEGF) agents, and more out of their own funds. In addition, Palmetto Retina Center has a team of five surgeons—prompt collection of revenue for surgeries is essential for the practice as well.

What happened? The practice's revenue cycle management (RCM) vendor had changed ownership. Since then, collection of accounts receivable (A/R) had slowed down.

“We had to write off charges because claims weren't getting appealed in a timely fashion,” said Gavin. “We saw an overall decline in the whole RCM system. We decided to make a change.”

THE SOLUTION

Gain specialty-specific, team-based support

Palmetto Retina Center already used NextGen Enterprise EHR. They decided to tap into NextGen Healthcare as their new RCM services vendor as well.

With NextGen RCM Services, each medical practice's needs are addressed by a dedicated client manager with expertise in their particular specialty.

“We selected NextGen RCM Services because of their experience in working with retina practices and track record of getting retina medications reimbursed,” said Gavin. “Having a RCM vendor who knows the nuances of our specialty is extremely important.”

Apply automation across the revenue cycle

NextGen RCM Services brought an increased level of automation. Applying automation across the revenue cycle helps make sure claims are billed at the actual contracted amount, coded accurately, and processed as quickly as possible.

Gavin appreciates NextGen Healthcare's team approach. Different teams within NextGen RCM Services are responsible for posting payments, following up on claims, and managing more complex claims. A team lead oversees these different teams.

CLIENT PROFILE

Palmetto Retina Center

Locations: West Columbia (main office), Downtown Columbia, Orangeburg, Sumter, Aiken, and Florence, South Carolina

Services: Treatment of vitreous and retinal diseases, as well as clinical research

NEXTGEN HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS

- NextGen® RCM Services
- NextGen® Enterprise EHR
- NextGen® Enterprise PM
- NextGen® Financial Analytics

HIGHLIGHTS



Reduced denials:
from 8.67% to 6.13%



Reduced DSO:
30s down to the low 20s



95% of claims paid
within 60 days

“The same RCM team members who I worked with a year ago continue to work with me today. I meet with the team lead every two weeks to discuss performance and address concerns. We are pleased. Our results speak for themselves.”

Get insight into financial data

The practice also obtained a clearer view of their own financial data and key performance indicators (KPIs). NextGen Financial Analytics pulls data from the PM system to provide useful insights, such as:

- Running totals of charges, payments, adjustments, and denials
- Graphic views of trends over time
- Dashboards to help manage A/R, billing, and denials
- Information on payment patterns from third-party payers and patients
- KPIs for benchmarking against other practices

Users can see unpaid claims sitting in buckets, ranging from zero to 30 days, 30 to 60 days, and so on—which helps to safeguard against unnecessary write-offs. They can also look more deeply into denials.

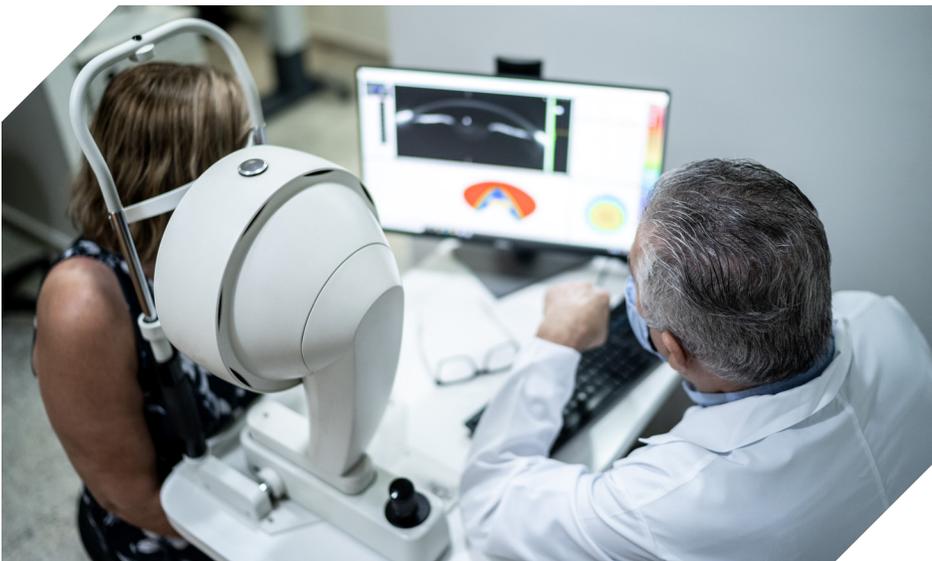
“I’ve seen how a claim is denied because there’s a misplaced character, such as an apostrophe in somebody’s name,” Gavin continued. “Training the front office staff to address these small yet important details helped get these claims approved the first time.”

Looking ahead, KPIs from NextGen Financial Analytics will help Palmetto Retina Center set benchmarks for future growth.

“I’m a data junkie,” says Gavin. “I love to look at data and slice and dice it. The financial analytics support this.”

“We selected NextGen RCM Services because of their experience working with retina practices and track record of getting retina medications reimbursed.”

David Gavin
Chief Executive Officer
Palmetto Retina Center



THE RESULT

Increased efficiency and financial gains

Results achieved by the practice reflect enhanced automation and specialty-based financial guidance:

- Denials dropped from 8.67% to 6.13%
- Days Sales Outstanding (DSO) reduced from the 30s to the low 20s
- 95% of claims paid within 60 days
- Charges grew 13.85% compared with experience under previous RCM vendor

“The same RCM team members who I worked with a year ago continue to work with me today. I meet with the team lead every two weeks to discuss performance and address concerns. We are pleased. Our results speak for themselves.”

David Gavin
Chief Executive Officer
Palmetto Retina Center

Eye Specialty Group Takes Control of Its Future

Eye Specialty Group is a multi-specialty ophthalmology practice in the Memphis, Tennessee area. To deliver the full spectrum of eye care, the practice works cooperatively with the local optometric community, composed largely of independent practices.

Powerful economic forces threatened to undermine the collaborative relationship between Eye Specialty Group and optometrists in Memphis. New payment models were coming into play. The dramatic growth of baby boomers who sought eye care threatened to overwhelm the practice's ability to keep up with demand.

Large health-system consolidators began buying up optometry practices in the area. In many cases, these consolidators shifted acquired practices away from medical eye care with modest optical sales toward a more strictly vision-based practice model with an emphasis on high optical sales.

To manage the growing need for primary medical eye care services and distribute care for baby boomers, Eye Specialty Group developed its own consolidation plan.

"We decided that consolidation was actually the best pathway to maintain the market diversity we helped build over the past 20 years," said Thomas Brown, practice administrator for Eye Specialty Group and CEO of Provident Practice Management Services.

However, the practice lacked knowledge and experience needed to manage this aspect of the eye-care business. How could Eye Specialty Group best gain control of its future and continue to fulfill its mission?

Network needed

Hospital-based health systems operating in Memphis were calling on Eye Specialty Group. There were approximately 200,000 diabetic patients who needed dilated eye exams—an important quality measure for this population. Eye Specialty Group had neither physical space, staff, nor the number of physicians to meet this demand.

"We saw a need to pull in the rest of the eye-care community to help," says Brown. "We started talking to optometrists about forming a network to work with health systems," recalls Brown.

Consolidators enter the market

Around this time, large healthcare organizations from outside the Memphis area appeared at the gate, beckoning to local optometrists. These organizations could potentially destabilize Eye Specialty Group by pressuring optometrists to alter their referral patterns, emphasizing business goals rather than patients' needs.

CLIENT PROFILE

Eye Specialty Group

- Provides state-of-the-art medical and surgical eye care
- Locations in Tennessee and north Mississippi
- Services include specialized glaucoma treatment; laser cataract, retina, LASIK, and eye reconstructive surgery; and a wide array of cosmetic procedures
- Committed to eye care excellence for more than 50 years

NEXTGEN HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS

- NextGen Healthcare Revenue Cycle Management
- NextGen® Enterprise EHR
- NextGen® Enterprise PM

RESULTS

16%
GROWTH

With support from NextGen Healthcare's RCM team, Eye Specialty Group achieved **16% growth** in overall billings among all organizations rolled in under the practice's umbrella, including six optometric practices

7 FEWER
FTEs

Growth was achieved although the practice employed **7 fewer FTEs**, almost a one-third reduction of their internal RCM department, during the same period

\$2.4
MILLION

Optical billing went from **zero to \$2.4 million** in the span of one year, with a concurrent reduction in internal RCM staff



Revenue cycle continuity maintained—During the COVID-19 public health emergency, NextGen Healthcare RCM enabled the practice to maintain continuity of billing and related activities, such as collection and payment posting

“Optometrists saw that consolidation was coming,” says Brown. “When presented with two options—align themselves with businesses outside of the area or align themselves with our practice and our mission to provide quality eye care for the whole community—several optometrists expressed that they wanted to come on board with us.”

Private equity investors also began making overtures to optometric practices with the goal to acquire and consolidate them for resale. As a result, more optometrists expressed their desire to continue working with Eye Specialty Group.

“We felt we could better serve the Memphis eye-care community, being from Memphis. We wanted to offer an alternative to outside business consolidators,” explains Brown. “The consolidators still came into the community. We wanted to be ready to compete with them.”

THE SOLUTION

To make the optometry roll up happen, Eye Specialty Group found a trusted partner to provide professional and technology infrastructure needed to expand—NextGen Healthcare’s revenue cycle management (RCM) services.

“NextGen Healthcare’s RCM team showed us that they had the expertise we needed to better serve these newly acquired practices. Their solution was scalable,” says Brown. “This helped us quickly grow without hiring a large ancillary staff to support new optometry practices.”

Separate the business office from medical care

In 2014, Eye Specialty Group separated its business functions from its medical practice and created a business entity called Provident Practice Management Services. With support from NextGen Healthcare RCM services, this new entity began providing office management services for local optometry groups.

“We do our best to maintain the traditional eye-care community here in Memphis,” says Brown, “we work closely with the optometric community.”

Business relationships flourished. “We offered optometry practices the opportunity to become a part of the Eye Specialty Group team,” says Brown.

“Each office that joins us gets access to all our medical records. In turn, our doctors have access to their medical records. It’s an exciting way to boost the level of communication between our offices, improve efficiency and efficacy of care, and deliver a better comprehensive service to the patients,” he explains.

Before developing these close business relationships with optometry practices, gaining a full understanding of surgical results was a challenge. After patients returned to their optometrist for post-operative care, a surgeon from Eye Specialty Group had to gather post-operative data via fax, email, and mail. Assessing surgical results on a large scale was next to impossible.

By sharing their EHR platform with newly acquired offices, Eye Specialty Group can track outcomes of surgical patients and compile reports. The surgeon can identify trends or anomalies at a glance. This helps achieve superior quality of care.

“NextGen Healthcare’s RCM team showed us that they had the expertise we needed to better serve newly acquired practices. Their solution was scalable.”

Thomas Brown
Practice administrator, Eye Specialty Group
CEO, Provident Practice Management Services.
President, Provident ASC Holdings

Roll in optometry

In 2019, Eye Specialty Group began rolling in optometric practices, bringing them in under its own tax ID number. Optometrists joined the medical staff of Eye Specialty Group as employees. Administrative staff became employees of Provident Practice Management Services. Eye Specialty Group effectively expanded into primary optometric care.

Brown explains further, “We’re partnering with optometry practices interested in the medical aspect of eye care—treatment of glaucoma and macular degeneration, and care of diabetic patients. Practices that align with large regional and national consolidators are typically interested only in retail eye care services, such as selling frames and lenses. Optometrists who align with us understand the need to move to an EHR platform and run their practice on more of a medical model.”

“Usually, we find optometrists exhausted by the constant bombardment of changes in the industry. While they are high-quality doctors, they aren’t comfortable keeping up with all the regulatory and payer changes. They need help to manage the business side of the practice, such as tracking quality measures, reporting, and billing for the hundreds of different payers in our market. It’s too complicated for a small practice,” says Brown.

THE BENEFITS

Smaller optometric practices commonly rely on one person, often a spouse, to run their office. That individual struggles to keep up with the multitude of vision and medical plans, changes to both plans, and coordination of benefits. With support from NextGen Healthcare’s RCM services, Eye Specialty Group can offer relief, stepping in to manage claims, send out bills, collect money, and post payments.

Because optometrists who join Eye Specialty Group share the same EHR platform, they gain access to patient information from the ophthalmology practice. In the future, Eye Specialty Group hopes to pull in more patient information from area health systems into their EHR for even better data sharing.

“Optometrists appreciate becoming a more integral part of the medical community in Memphis. Our ability to deliver this benefit through NextGen Enterprise EHR has been a real benefit to them,” says Brown.

Better communication for better results

According to Brown, improved communication offers clinical and financial benefits in the management of common eye conditions, such as cataracts, macular degeneration, and glaucoma.

Cataracts

After cataract surgery, Eye Specialty Group sends patients back to their optometrists for post-operative exams. Optometrists outside Eye Specialty Group may document visual acuity using other platforms or, what’s worse, chart on paper. If they send in postoperative results—not all do—it’s usually by fax.

These outside optometrists bill for postoperative care, which cuts Eye Specialty Group’s fees by about 20 percent. If visual acuity test results come in, the practice must pay an employee to enter these results into their EHR, incurring a significant cost.

“Optometrists really appreciate becoming a more integral part of the medical community in Memphis. Our ability to deliver this benefit through NextGen Enterprise EHR has been a real benefit to them.”

Thomas Brown
Practice administrator, Eye Specialty Group
CEO, Provident Practice Management Services.
President, Provident ASC Holdings

If the optometry practice shares the Eye Specialty Group EHR platform, data can be entered, delivered, and tracked with much greater accuracy. No additional cost is incurred for entering visual acuity data into the system.

Macular degeneration

One clinical goal: Prevent progression from dry to wet macular degeneration. Dry type is more common, but it usually advances slowly. Wet type is more likely to cause a sudden change, resulting in serious vision loss.¹

Eye Specialty Group hopes to use data from their EHR platform to find patterns in their patient population that converts from dry to wet macular degeneration. This will support efforts of ophthalmic and optometric practices in the community to prevent this dangerous transition.

In addition to enhancing patient wellbeing, such efforts may lead significant cost savings for third-party payers. Potentially, Eye Care Associates can participate in shared savings. In order for this to happen, doctors must be on the same EHR platform or use systems that communicate effectively with Eye Specialty Group's EHR.

Glaucoma

Another goal of Eye Specialty Group: Identify patients at high risk for advancing glaucoma and focus attention on treating these patients. Glaucoma affects approximately 1.9 percent of individuals age 40 or older in the United States.²

In the Memphis area, thousands of people have glaucoma or a family history of the disorder. Instead of treating everybody with glaucoma in the same way, using data stored in the EHR to identify characteristics of patients more likely to convert to more serious forms of the condition may help target patients for additional management and reduce incidence of advanced disease.

Ride the consolidation wave

Recent trends and business headlines provide a strong indication that consolidation in the healthcare industry will continue for some time. Almost every tech giant—including Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, and Google through its parent company Alphabet, Inc.—has attempted to enter the healthcare space; while some efforts fail, others prove successful.³ From 2013 to 2016, private equity firms acquired 355 physician practices.⁴ In 2018, CVS completed its acquisition of Aetna, Inc. In 2019, Walmart opened its first in-store health clinic, offering primary medical, dental, vision, and mental health care.⁵

Eye Specialty Group offers a model for smaller practices to establish a community-based healthcare system to ride the wave of consolidation. This model may give ophthalmology, optometry, and other medical groups a choice in the face of powerful economic forces:

- Join in the wave of consolidation; or
- Create a healthcare system and, after consolidation has run its course, decide the best course of action.

“We looked for opportunities to roll up these optometric practices. However, one of the biggest hindrances was our lack of knowledge of the full picture of optometric practice. NextGen Healthcare’s RCM team helped us roll in these practices and support them. This helped us avoid the need to hire a large ancillary staff.”

Thomas Brown
Practice administrator, Eye Specialty Group
CEO, Provident Practice Management Services.
President, Provident ASC Holdings

As time moves forward, Eye Specialty Group will have options. They can sell or merge with a consolidated healthcare entity or continue to contract with larger health systems as a separate eye-care business.

“We want to create the opportunity to make a decision when we feel the time is right,” says Brown, “whether to become acquired, merge with larger entities, or contract with them as an independent business. We want to define our future as opposed to having other groups define it for us.”



Eye Center South Conquers a Mountain of Transcriptions

NextGen Mobile supports a strong referral loop, the patient visit, and on-call physician responsibilities.

THE CHALLENGE

The sheer volume of transcriptions was overwhelming

Eye Center South is determined to become a regional force for better healthcare. The ophthalmology practice began in Dothan, Alabama about forty years ago. They've expanded to include 14 locations throughout Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. In the last two years, they have incorporated optometry and vision care, with plans to continue to add more services in the future.

With growth comes inevitable administration challenges. For Eye Center South, one challenge was the sheer volume of medical transcription. The vast majority of patients come from referrals, which means results of each office visit, procedure, and surgery must be communicated back to the referring provider. Doctors dictate tons of notes. Three or four staff people were needed to transcribe letters and other communications. Even with these dedicated human resources, the practice often fell behind on transcriptions.

THE SOLUTION

According to Travis Wright, clinical director at Eye Center South, the practice has been on the NextGen Enterprise platform for several years. "NextGen® solutions allow us to make our doctors more efficient and increase our patient load. All the typical things you hear their platform does, we've actually done," says Wright.



CLIENT PROFILE

Eye Center South

- Began in Dothan, Alabama; now has 14 locations across Alabama, Florida, and Georgia
- Provides effective treatment for cataracts, glaucoma, retina disorders, and more; services include eye exams and surgical procedures
- 29 providers in ophthalmology and optometry

NEXTGEN HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS

- NextGen® Mobile
- NextGen® Enterprise EHR
- NextGen® Automated Document Sharing

HIGHLIGHTS



4 FTEs reallocated to tasks other than transcription—tasks more directly related to patient care and revenue generation



Stronger relationships with referring providers



Cellphone pics of eye **uploaded directly into EHR**—saves on cost and helps generate revenue



Greater convenience for on-call physicians

When first presented with NextGen® Mobile, physicians and staff at Eye Center South were eager to try it out. Set up for NextGen Mobile takes around 60 days, from signing a contract to be up and running. During this time, testing takes place and provider preferences are determined. NextGen Mobile offers different options for transcription, including editing of a voice-to-text transcript by a professional service. This option is highly customizable according to each provider's preferences and practice needs.

THE RESULTS

Ease of referral letters

Travis Wright explains: "After the physician sees a patient, for example, following up on a corneal procedure or a cataract surgery, he or she walks out of the room, cellphone in hand, clicks a button on the NextGen Mobile app, starts dictating, and then moves on to the next patient. Right then and there, the physician can get quick, accurate information back to the referring provider. Alternatively, the physician can complete dictations after seeing patients, from the convenience of their home, if they wish.

"If a custom letter must be sent out, it goes to NextGen Healthcare's transcription service, they type it up, and within 24 to 48 hours it's back and ready to be sent out. The process takes about 48 hours from start to finish. Before we had NextGen Mobile, it took a week and a half, or more."

Many options are available. For example, physicians can request STAT turnaround, with correspondence back in 2 hours, with an additional cost.

Sebastian B. Heersink, MD, cataract and laser refractive surgeon and cornea specialist at Eye Center South, lists ease of closing the referral loop as the number one benefit of NextGen Mobile. "I see a patient, spend about 45 seconds dictating, and it's done. The most significant aspect is ease of use. Press two buttons and it's handled," says Dr. Heersink.

While providers can use pre-formatted, out-of-the-box templates, transcription services enable them to create custom letters and add a personal touch to their correspondence. Dr. Heersink often does so; for example, asking the referring physician about their family's wellbeing or sharing insights into the patient under their care.

Speed, accuracy, and personalization of correspondence helps strengthen relationships with referring providers. With about 95 percent of Eye Center South's patients coming from referrals, these relationships are extremely important, both to each individual physician's success and the practice as a whole.

Once correspondence is ready and approved, Eye Center South uses NextGen Automated Document Sharing to send it out. This solution automates all steps in the process from within NextGen Enterprise EHR, using rule-based programming.

Thanks to NextGen Mobile and NextGen Automated Document Sharing, Eye Center South was able to reallocate four full-time equivalents (FTEs) to tasks other than transcription. The organization no longer needs to employ any transcriptionists. Staff resources were reallocated from administrative support to functions that support patient care more directly and help generate revenue. "When you consider the savings that result from reallocating FTEs, the expense for NextGen Mobile is far from unreasonable," says Travis Wright.

"I see a patient, spend about 45 seconds dictating, and it's done. The most significant aspect is ease of use. Press two buttons and it's handled."

Sebastian B. Heersink, MD
Cataract and Laser Refractive
Surgeon and Cornea Specialist
Eye Center South

Cellphone support for patient care

According to Dr. Heersink, another key benefit of NextGen Mobile is that allows him to take pictures during an eye exam using his cellphone, show the images to patients, and have them seamlessly integrate into the EHR.

“I have an adapter that slips right on the slit lamp camera, so it takes literally five seconds to take a picture of the patient’s eye. With NextGen Mobile, I can make an annotation right on the picture—for example, noting a corneal ulcer, age-related macular degeneration, or cataract,” explains Dr. Heersink.

“Of all the things we do, this may be the one patients find most impressive. They think the technology is mindboggling, which is quite funny when you think of all the super-expensive technology we use in our practice.”

Within a matter of seconds, pictures can be sent to the patient’s chart in the EHR. Before NextGen Mobile, photos would be emailed to office staff who would upload them to the EHR, adding to the practice’s labor costs.

Dr. Heersink points out that clinical photos uploaded to the patient’s chart in the EHR help generate revenue. These photos can also be shared with colleagues in support of clinical care.

Less hassle for on-call physicians

Questions and refill requests from patients during off hours are triaged by techs, who forward them to an on-call physician as needed. Using NextGen Mobile, the physician can conveniently pull up the patient’s profile, access their chart, approve or disapprove the request, and send a message back to the staff with guidance.

“The ease of being on-call is a huge benefit,” says Dr. Heersink. “When a call comes in, instead of having to stop what I’m doing, find a computer and a wi-fi connection and log in, I can just look up what I need on my cellphone. I find the patient’s chart, determine what meds they’re on, order a refill, or answer the request as necessary.”

“If I’m reading a bedtime story to one of my children or even with my family at the movies, the interruption is not a big hassle. I can answer the question and quickly get back to what I’m doing.”

“The ease of being on-call is a huge benefit. When a call comes in, instead of having to stop what I’m doing, find a computer and a wi-fi connection and log in, I can just look up what I need on my cellphone. I find the patient’s chart, determine what meds they’re on, order a refill, or answer the request as necessary.”

Sebastian B. Heersink, MD
Cataract and Laser Refractive
Surgeon and Cornea Specialist
Eye Center South

The business of eye care has never been more challenging. Learn from the experience of fellow practice leaders.

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