

Optum™ Physician EMR



Dr. Douglas Foreman improves patient care, becomes one of the first physicians to qualify for federal health IT incentives using Optum Physician EMR's Meaningful Use Dashboard

Challenges

Dr. Douglas Foreman, D.O., a family physician in Warwick, Rhode Island, began converting his practice to electronic health records (EHR) using Optum Physician EMR several years ago. He found the system so beneficial that, by May 2009, he was using it for all patient visits.

Dr. Foreman wanted to take advantage of the federal health IT incentives established by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. In order to do that, physicians must demonstrate meaningful use of the technology as defined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). It can be challenging to meet those guidelines. Dr. Foreman was looking for a system that would:

Track progress toward meeting the guidelines. Meaningful use guidelines require that physicians meet 15 Core objectives, and five out of 10 Menu-set objectives. For example, meaningful use rules require eligible physicians to maintain active medication allergy lists for their patients, record patient smoking status, provide patients with electronic copies of their health

Highlights

- With the Optum Physician EMR system and its unique Meaningful Use Dashboard, Dr. Foreman has met Phase 1 Meaningful Use guidelines, and qualified for Medicare health IT incentive payments.
- Dr. Foreman uses the Optum Physician EMR system and the Meaningful Use Dashboard to track important medical quality metrics, and to continually improve upon them.
- Dr. Foreman has measurably improved patient care as a result of the use of the Optum Physician EMR system and the Meaningful Use Dashboard.

information, and be able to report ambulatory clinical quality measures to the CMS, or to states or other authorized entities. Manually tracking progress toward meaningful use measures would be an arduous task. Dr. Foreman was looking for a system to do it in an automated way.

Help inform clinical and practice management decision-making. Identifying progress toward meeting meaningful use guidelines is only helpful if a physician can use that information to take corrective actions in order to meet them. Obtaining actionable health intelligence from patient records to enhance patient care would otherwise require a team of consultants' hours—and considerable expense—to complete. Dr. Foreman wanted a system that would aid in improving performance, and ultimately help him meet meaningful use requirements.

Be simple to use and suitable for a small practice. Dr. Foreman runs a family practice with a small staff. Any system would have to be simple, intuitive, and not require extensive training and internal support.

Help improve patient care. The ultimate goal of the health IT incentives and meaningful use requirements is to improve the delivery and effectiveness of patient care. Overriding everything else, Dr. Foreman was looking for a system that would help improve the health of his patients.

"It can be overwhelming for a physician to try and meet meaningful use guidelines," Dr. Foreman says. "We were looking for a simple way to meet those guidelines and also improve patient care."

Solutions

In order to gauge how well he is meeting the meaningful use guidelines, Dr. Foreman used the Meaningful Use Dashboard created by Optum, which is already installed for all of the more than 11,000 Optum Physician EMR users.

The Meaningful Use Dashboard illustrates the percentage of each physician's patient visits that meets the defined level required for each meaningful use objective, provides links to the relevant meaningful use criteria, and gives access to Optum Physician EMR documentation and training.

Users can also drill down from the Meaningful Use Key Performance Indicator Reports into patient records to identify missed and successful cases, and correct inefficient processes or proactively reach out to patients to eliminate gaps in care.

"The Meaningful Use Dashboard has been a tremendous aid in helping us demonstrate meaningful use," says Caroline Valerio, office manager at Dr. Foreman's practice. "Every morning when I come into the office, I can see bar graphs that chart our progress toward each measure. You can then get more details about any measure, and see what you need to do in order to achieve our objectives."

Results

Using Optum Physician EMR's Meaningful Use Dashboard, Dr. Foreman became one of the first physicians in the United States to attest to meeting Phase 1 Medicare Meaningful Use requirements when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services began accepting attestations on April 18, 2011. In addition to demonstrating meaningful use in all 15 Core measures, Dr. Foreman surpassed objectives for Menu-set requirements. He qualified in seven of the 10 Menu-set objectives.

"I don't know how we would have been able to meet all the objectives without (Optum Physician EMR) and its Meaningful Use Dashboard," Dr. Foreman says. "It's almost impossible to meet those objectives on your own, but the dashboard is so simple to use, and provides such a wealth of intelligence and helpful tools, we were able to accomplish it. I would highly recommend it for other physicians."

Office Manager Valerio echoes the doctor's sentiments.

"I think the biggest thing that physicians and office staff need to realize is that the only thing between them and demonstrating meaningful use is fear of the unknown and fear of not succeeding," she says. "(Optum) is committed to helping you succeed. Their staff are interactive, progressive, and when you call, you're not put on hold—they want to hear from you and want to help. We couldn't have done this on our own, but with (Optum's) expert staff and innovative technology, we've succeeded."

To ensure success, the entire office participated in planning on how Optum Physician EMR and its dashboard would be used to meet meaningful use guidelines. They discussed everyone's responsibilities for properly documenting patient care and interactions, including inputting information about smoking history, childhood obesity, vaccinations, and other important health data. Little training was required, and very quickly the system was up and running.

Dr. Foreman says that the greatest benefit of Optum Physician EMR's Meaningful Use Dashboard goes well beyond meeting the meaningful use requirements—it improves patient health.

"Ultimately, we're looking for a tool that can help improve the health of our patients, because that's the ultimate goal of the guidelines," he explains. "Using the Meaningful Use Dashboard was a real eye opener for me. Before using it, I had thought that I was doing a good job on documentation of and counseling on smoking cessation as well as obesity and on several other quality measures. When I generated reports, though, I saw that I was not as thorough as I thought I was. It was very useful for me to see those reports, because they helped me make better decisions and improve patient care."

Dr. Foreman believes that Optum Physician EMR and its Meaningful Use Dashboard point the way toward how all health care will be delivered in the future—and for the better. “You have to embrace the trajectory of the future of health care,” he says. “Electronic information will be at the core of it. I’ve already seen how it can help improve patient care, and I expect even more improvements in the future. Optum, Optum Physician EMR, and the Meaningful Use Dashboard are all ideal partners for helping me accomplish that.”

About Dr. Douglas Foreman

Dr. Douglas Foreman, D.O. has been practicing family medicine in Warwick, Rhode Island since 1990 and is a member of the Family Practice Department at Kent County Memorial Hospital in Warwick.

About Optum

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