

Center for Sight in Newark, Ohio

An EHR Success Story

The Problem: Established Practice Wants to Maintain High Standards

In 2005, James E. Silone Jr, DO, and his two partners converted their ophthalmic group practice to electronic health records (EHR)—well before many people were seriously considering making the transition. “For the high level of service and patient care that we want to provide, we need to stay ahead of technology, not just play catch-up,” Dr. Silone says. “There are inherent inefficiencies to maintaining paper records in group practice.” But with 30 years of patient records, this practice wasn’t about to eliminate all paper overnight. They opted to keep the old file archives, but do everything electronically going forward.

The Solution: Meet Each Doctor’s Needs with Compulink’s Ophthalmology Advantage™

“Ophthalmologists are ‘Type A’ people: We like to do things our way. And that means that an EHR system really needs to be tailored to each individual doctor,” says Dr. Silone. “Compulink helped us customize each doctor’s exam options so that each of us could keep using the terminology we like. Ophthalmology Advantage didn’t slow us down because we didn’t have to conform to the software or to another doctor’s style,” he says. “Instead, our EHR system truly supports our clinical decision making. It encompasses all the information we need to make a diagnosis, shows us data in a format that is useful to us, and allows us to enter information efficiently.”

The Result: Provide Better Patient Care

“EHR has revolutionized our tracking of glaucoma patients,” says Dr. Silone. “We went from hand-copying pertinent information to a page in the front of the chart to an automatic, much more robust glaucoma flow sheet that Advantage constantly updates with new exam details and images. The system plots every IOP reading ever taken by date and time, making it easy to see and share with the patient the impact of therapeutic interventions. I can click on the OCT or visual fields tab to see every test we’ve obtained over the years for that patient. When you are trying to detect and prevent disease progression, there is no substitute for electronic tracking,” he says. Again, customization made his screen views much more relevant for clinical decision making. “For example, I changed the glaucoma flow sheet to display only ophthalmic medications. Systemic medications are recorded elsewhere in the record, but they aren’t a priority for me in tracking progression.”

Pearls for Success

“Someone with a financial stake in the practice needs to understand how the EHR system works and be able to make changes to it,” Dr. Silone says. “If you are entirely dependent on a junior staffer or the software vendor to make changes, it will be hard to get the system to perform exactly the way the doctors want.” You don’t need to be a tech wizard, he says, “But before you buy a system, you do need to closely examine how easy it is to customize the system, exactly what elements can be changed, and whether you can do it yourself.”

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