ACOM Health

The Second Time Around

Dr. Pete Szakacs is back in the office, lured out of retirement by the prospect of a paperless practice

Dr. Peter J. Szakacs

The RAPID Complete solution enables doctors and their staffs to improve efficiency, reduce accounts receivable days outstanding, and manage payer contracts effectively.

BACKGROUND

Still loving the profession but sick of the paperwork after some 25 years in practice, Dr. Peter J. Szakacs ("Dr. Pete") sold his chiropractic office in suburban Philadelphia and moved to Florida. Not much later, looking to be productive again, he established a practice near Tampa in early 2006.

Now back doing what he loves, Dr. Pete is infused with enthusiasm about healing patients and about building a practice in which paper has all but disappeared. The vehicle that supports his vision is RAPID Complete, a chiropractic office total solution from the Healthcare Business Division of ACOM Solutions, Inc.

Dr. Pete didn't start out to be a chiropractor. He first completed pre-med studies at the University of Pennsylvania, but in the back of his mind was a conversation that lingered from his high school days. He had hurt his back in football and had been treated by a chiropractor who had also helped both of his parents to avoid surgery. The chiropractor, Dr. John Rucki, advised him to forget medical school and to become a chiropractor instead, citing his own highly satisfying experience in the profession.

THE CHOICE

Dr. Pete followed his pre-med studies with a year of graduate work and then enrolled in The Columbia Institute of Chiropractic, now known as New York Chiropractic College. "I loved it immediately," he says, "and I never looked back." Upon graduation, he began

practicing in Long Island, New York; then three years later moved to the northern suburbs of Philadelphia, his home territory.

Retirement for Dr. Pete was never about a rocking chair and a fishing pole. For a while, he was CEO of a chiropractic management firm that developed a web-based training program for chiropractic assistants, which he still owns and operates.

Still unsatisfied, he reasoned that by starting from scratch and employing technology, he could structure his ideal office environment -- one that is optimized for patient care and eliminates the paperwork tedium that had plagued him in Pennsylvania. The result is Quantum Vitality Centres where Dr. Pete practices with two additional doctors and two job-sharing front office staffers.

"We like to work with serious cases that require an extended program of applications," he says. "Often that involves problems such as bad disks that other DCs may not want to treat, or patients with chronic conditions that have not responded well to other treatments."

NEW KIND OF OFFICE

Dr. Pete determined that his new office would be technology-intensive -- automated, wireless and paperless.

For his professional and business operations, Dr. Pete purchased RAPID Complete, a modular end-to-end chiropractic office solution with two key components:

Using RAPID EMR, doctors can build patient files by tapping checklists, images and diagrams displayed on the interactive computer screen, each of which has standardized or doctor-customized paragraphs of associated text that go directly into the patient file.

RAPID EMR (Electronic Medical Records), the clinical module that enable doctors to automate notes and reporting, complete with coding and compliance support; and correspondingly, RAPID EPM (Enhanced Practice Management) which streamlines the fundamental front office applications.

The RAPID Complete solution enables doctors and their staffs to improve efficiency, reduce accounts receivable days outstanding, and manage payer contracts effectively. Among other activities, it automates patient check-in and scheduling, treatment tracking and scheduling, authorization management, billing and collection, and a profusion of management reports.

Using RAPID EMR, doctors can build patient files by tapping checklists, images and diagrams displayed on the interactive computer screen, each of which has standardized or doctor-customized paragraphs of associated text that go directly into the patient file. In addition to creating SOAP notes automatically, handwritten input can be scribed directly on the screen, and documents from external sources, such as accident reports and X-rays, can be scanned into the patient's file. All input is automatically assigned to the proper place within the file structure. To produce reports, doctors simply select the desired report and it is generated instantly from the information that is in the patient file.

SELECTION CRITERIA
Selection of the RAPID paperless office solution was driven by the efficiency of its notes and documentation capabilities, he says. He sat through numerous product demonstrations, with RAPID emerging as one of two finalists. The clinchers, he says, were RAPID's reporting capability, its bilingual intake forms in English and Spanish, and the fact that ACOM's Healthcare Division headquarters were nearby in the Tampa Bay area.

Another key advantage as his practice expands, he says, is that reports will remain consistent throughout, and that he will be able to monitor them on the wireless network. Coding and compliance, he believes, are far too complicated, and while he personally feels comfortable with this complexity, RAPID's onboard coding and compliance support helps to maintain accurate and complete documentation. This in turn leads to fewer reimbursement delays and denials, and improved cash flow.

Dr. Pete still handwrites some of his SOAP notes, using personal shorthand developed over his years of practice. But the graphic helpers that automate SOAP notes are valuable, he says, noting that simply clicking on graphics expands a patient file with comprehensive, accurate information.

In only a few months of use, Dr. Pete has become an enthusiastic RAPID advocate.

"It saves time, it produces better reports and more complete documentation, and it gets rid of 95% of the manual activity in the office. It eliminates all of the reasons that I ever left the practice in the first place. Now I can put most of my focus on helping people get and stay well. Who wouldn't like that?"

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