

■ ProVation[®] MD

Leading the way in procedure documentation and coding



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CASE STUDY

CAROLINAS HEALTHCARE SYSTEM HARNESSSES SOFTWARE TO ELIMINATE TRANSCRIPTION AND INCREASE PATIENT THROUGHPUT

As the fourth largest public IDN (Integrated Health Network) in the country, Carolinas HealthCare System (CHS) is known for setting the bar high. The organization is devoted to delivering excellent patient care and superb customer service, pioneering research and education, and advancing the treatment of disease. Not surprisingly, CHS has also embraced technological solutions that support these objectives, developing an IT strategy and infrastructure that is both forward reaching and sophisticated. In 2003, Carolinas Medical Center (CMC), CHS' flagship hospital, went looking for an image archiving system to eliminate the cost of printing and storing images taken during the more than 15,000 procedures performed each year in its Gastroenterology and Endoscopy Department. They ended up with much more – a nursing and physician procedure documentation software system from Minneapolis-based ProVation[®] Medical Inc. that allows them to store images electronically while eliminating transcription costs and delays, streamlining workflow and increasing patient throughput. Based on the impressive results, the health care system also implemented the software at two more locations, and looks to add additional locations and medical specialties in the future.



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CASE STUDY

CAROLINAS HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

A SUPERIOR SOLUTION

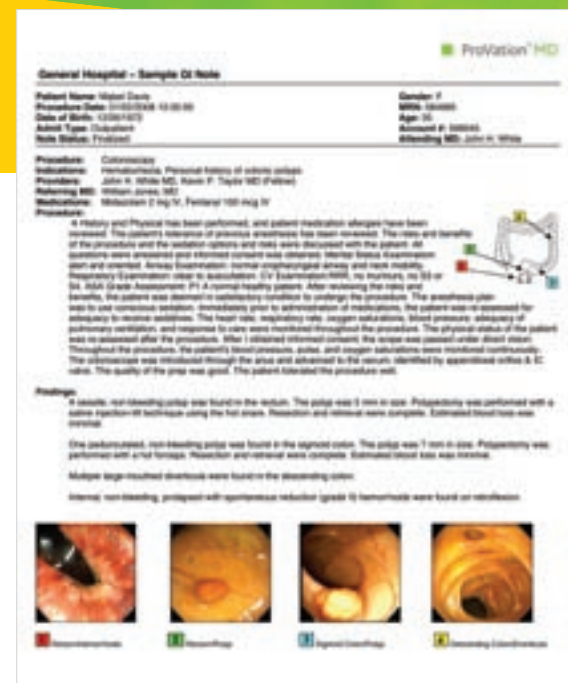
Connie Simms, Nurse Manager of CMC Endoscopy, was involved in the decision to implement ProVation MD and RN software, and she recalls how clearly the company and its product stood out from the competition. "We were originally looking only to eliminate the cost of printing and storing hard-copy Mavigraph images, but once we saw the ProVation software it was obvious that the product was superior to everything else we were looking at," she says. "We evaluated four different systems, and with physician involvement we narrowed it to two. But ProVation was comprehensive; the physicians liked the way it worked, and it had the best nursing product we looked at." And so, the decision was made.

ProVation MD software replaced dictation/transcription, allowing physicians to create and e-sign clinical notes immediately after a procedure. Physicians make selections from a series of medical content-driven menus that emulate typical procedural workflow and follow logical paths, automatically adapting to each piece of information that is selected. These selections then create detailed clinical notes, complete with diagrams, that read just as if they were dictated. The software's coding engine applies appropriate CPT, ICD and CCI edit codes, which are driven by the medical content of the note. ProVation MD software interfaces with endoscopes, allowing the physician to attach and incorporate any relevant images. ProVation RN software standardizes nursing documentation and eliminates paper charting, and automatically collects information from vitals monitors.

Once the ProVation implementation was under way, it became clear to Simms that CMC had made the right choice. "It didn't take very long for both our physicians and nurses to become comfortable with the software," she says. "Even the physicians who'd initially been resistant to the change became proficient very quickly. You can tell that physicians had involvement in the creation of the software – the learning curve was minimal."

Chris Bragg, manager of Specialty Applications for CHS' IT division, has years of experience working with a variety of vendors on technological implementations. Like Simms, he recalls the ProVation implementation as a positive experience. "My sense was that ProVation provided a solid project plan and stuck close to it – they were able to maintain their timeline and consistently meet project milestones," he says.

Bragg also gives high marks to the training provided by ProVation's representatives. "Any time you have a large group of physicians to train, it requires a high degree of cooperation between the customer and vendor during the go-live," he says. "Our plan called for a total transition from dictation to ProVation software in just one week, so it was 'do-or-die' for us. But between our Power Users and the ProVation trainers, we gave the physicians enough support that they felt comfortable within a short amount of time."



TIME- AND COST-SAVINGS QUICKLY ADD UP

ProVation's benefits were immediately evident to Simms. The elimination of transcription costs made a tremendous impact on her budget. Prior to implementing the software, transcription costs were \$6 per note. With an average annual caseload of 15,000 procedures, that adds up to a whopping \$90,000 – year after year. By using ProVation, CMC's Endoscopy Department eliminated this perpetual financial drain. The timesavings were impressive as well. With successful training and a group of physicians who quickly took to using the software, it did not take long for ProVation's benefits to impact the department. Because CHS policies require an immediate post-procedure note be included in the patient chart, physicians had been pulling double-documentation duty. Immediately after the procedure, they were required to handwrite a note (complete with history & physical, procedure detail and findings) that could be included in the patient chart; they later dictated the entire note from scratch so that a permanent transcribed copy could be generated.

Simms estimates that by using the ProVation software instead of this cumbersome and duplicative documentation process, her department has shaved at least 2-3 minutes of physician time off each case. Add in the time that ProVation RN saves in pre-admission and patient preparation, and that number grows to 8 minutes per case. Simms calculates this increased patient throughput at 1-2 cases per day. With net collections averaging \$350 per case for Gastroenterology,* this increased patient throughput translates into \$350 -700 extra revenue per day, or \$91,000-182,000 per year (assuming 260 working days) incremental new revenue.

Dr. Martin Scobey, who has practiced at CMC since 1991, appreciates the ability to quickly and easily generate real-time documentation. "Once I'm done, I'm done – I don't have to sign charts from medical records, don't have to go back and review or make corrections, and I don't have to try to document the procedure details from memory," he says. "It didn't take long for both our physicians and nurses to become comfortable with the software. You can tell that physicians had involvement in the creation of the software – the learning curve was minimal."

The software's ability to create immediate patient letters, personalized and populated by the procedure record, also ranks high on Dr. Scobey's list. "Generating the patient letter with the software is a significant timesaving factor for me," he attests. "The process is automatic, the letter is phrased exactly as I want it, and I know that the patient has all necessary instructions when he or she walks out the door."

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NO MORE WRITERS-CRAMP FOR RNS

With ProVation RN software, Simms found that she and her nursing staff were spending their time in and out of the procedure room far more efficiently. "With all the forms nurses are required to fill out, we were literally getting writer's cramp before we implemented ProVation," she recalls. "Now we zoom through the documentation very quickly." The accessibility of completed documentation has also streamlined her workflow. "Before ProVation, if a patient called back we had to pull medical records and order the files, which was time consuming. Now we just pull up the past notes – the timesavings is unbelievable."

Simms also appreciates the consistency of the department's post-ProVation nursing documentation. "Not everyone writes the same, but with ProVation you can understand the documentation, because it's typed and legible, and it uses standard language," she says.

BRINGING THE BENEFITS TO MORE CHS SITES

Given the success of the ProVation implementation at CMC, it was only a matter of time before the health system looked to impart those benefits to its other facilities. When CMC expanded its Gastroenterology-Endoscopy services to a state-of-the-art endoscopy suite in the new Carolinas Surgery Center, Simms and the physicians lobbied for the implementation of ProVation at the facility. "I just told them we had to have ProVation there to make it work," she recalls. They went live with the software in February 2004.

The Surgery Center implementation was followed by a ProVation rollout at Carolinas Medical Center Pineville, a 109-bed health facility offering inpatient and outpatient services in a variety of medical specialties. Currently under consideration is an expansion to three additional CHS facilities, as well as the addition of the ProVation software for Pain Management. CHS is a forward thinking and moving organization, and with the additional ProVation installations, the cost savings and workflow efficiencies continue to ripple throughout the health system. Simms expects a continued successful partnership between ProVation and CHS. "With each installation, ProVation has saved us time and money," she says. "We are committed to making that trend continue."

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*** Assumes 260 working days.*