



Doctors position internal medicine practice for the future

By Roger Holloway, Co-Director of IL-HITREC

Is the future here now? That may well be a question you ask yourself when you visit the practice of Doctors Kevin and Angela Egly in Sandwich, IL. During a recent visit, I was extremely impressed at the unique approach to using electronic health records they have applied to providing primary care, as well as their in-depth knowledge of each and every patient.

Drs. Egly are both board-certified internal medicine physicians who have been practicing for 14 years. In 2004, they decided to make a change in their professional and personal lives and set-up practice on their own. The doctors looked carefully at what was going on in healthcare and what they thought would be impending changes.

As a husband-and-wife physician team committed to excellence, they wanted to plan for those changes while ensuring their place in an evolving healthcare environment. They saw a primary care field that would continue to be increasingly impacted by capitation and changing demographics with an increase of Medicare and Medicaid patients. The industry response at that time had been to simply see an increasing volume of patients. That appeared to be in conflict with the professional and personal values of both Drs. Egly.

In looking at how they would construct a practice, they determined electronic health records could have a dramatic impact on their ability to provide care. They believed EHRs could electronically provide much of the back-end processing that went into seeing their patients.

An issue of concern at the time was the high-capital costs of acquiring an EHR, as well as the infrastructure issues that generally come with a change to electronic records. Drs. Egly were not deterred, however, and after much review and study they chose to adopt E-MD.

They said they have been very satisfied and have worked diligently to increase their knowledge and awareness of the values of the EHR tool for their practice. They focused their modeling and cost services to be targeted at Medicare reimbursement.

In order to meet those requirements, Drs. Egly developed an operational model in which the physician provides not only patient care, but also acknowledges where that patient is in terms of important quality information. The EHR system also provides insight to an appropriate billing method.

It is clear Drs. Egly sought a better balance of life and work by taking a minimalist approach to space infrastructure. They have been able to develop a practice that satisfies them both professionally, as well as personally. Their practice allows them the time necessary for their family and the pursuit of the very best and most-informed care for their patients.

As a result of this process, they have benefited the community by providing ready-access to two internal medicine physicians who are extremely knowledgeable about their patients, as well as the best practice for those particular diagnoses that a patient may present with. It certainly appears upon first glance that these physicians have close professional relationships with their patients. Certainly, as patients, that is something we all wish for.

Drs. Egly provide an excellent example for other physicians and providers. They believe we must continue to change the way we provide healthcare and not look at the old models. We must begin the process with a clean sheet of paper and ask the question, "How do I provide the best care for the patient and remain happy and satisfied as a provider?"

Drs. Egly enjoy the ability to increase patient volume without dramatically increasing costs. As their lives change over the years, they are able to adjust their practice in a proportional and controllable fashion to benefit their patients and yet meet their personal needs.

IL-HITREC is happy to be providing ongoing services to this practice to assist them in reaching Stage 1 and State 2 Meaningful Use, as well as ongoing educational opportunities.

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