


Metrohealth Clinic

Burnaby, British Columbia



The Metrohealth Clinic is a large urban general practice clinic located in the busy Metrotown area of Burnaby British Columbia, close to Metrotown Mall, the largest shopping mall in BC and the second largest in Canada.

“Moving to an EMR from paper has been like night and day. Two clicks of a mouse and I’ve got patient information at my fingertips. With many months of encounter data in our EMR system we’re now able to spot patient trends really early, which would be much more difficult with paper. I also like that we can track abnormal results and with a simple click of a mouse I can drill down on the results and plot a graph, see the trend onward.”

Princeton H. Lim, MD
Metrohealth Clinic

The Metrohealth Clinic is a large urban general practice clinic located in the busy Metrotown area of Burnaby British Columbia; close to Metrotown Mall, it is the largest shopping mall in BC and the second largest in Canada. Metrohealth has a number of patients who visit regularly and many who visit the area to shop or who only live in the area for the winter months. Metrohealth required an EMR solution flexible enough to accommodate the patient who visits ten times per year as well as those who only visit the clinic once every two years. By implementing an EMR (electronic medical record), Metrohealth was able to improve access to patient records, enhance the integrity and legibility of patient records, and has become more proactive in the care and management of patients with chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes.

Managing and Improving the Integrity of Patient Records

Dr. Lim had reservations about the integrity of patient charts with a paper-based system. “Everyone has a different style of charting; also some physicians take the chart apart and don’t put it back together the same way, making it awkward for the next physician or staff person to use the chart. There are physicians in the clinic whose hand writing is very difficult to read, I think the issue of legibility of the paper chart is serious. Approximately 20% of our patients are walk-ins, and many visit infrequently. When there is only one doctor seeing a patient over time the problem might not be too bad; when you have six different physicians involved in a single patient’s care over a long period of time, the issue of the integrity of the chart becomes much more serious.”

He concluded, “From both an audit and a patient safety perspective it’s so important that all of the entries are clear and legible; with an EMR, complete and legible information is accessible to every physician treating the patient all the time. Files don’t go missing and are always available.”

Dr. Lim also invested in a high quality multi-function photocopier and scanner made by Kyocera Mita. The photocopier acts as a scanner and converts paper documents directly to PDF; “Now paper reports and consultations that arrive by mail are scanned and linked directly to the patient record within a couple of hours. Lab results come in electronically via the Internet through our electronic lab provider; these go directly into the Physician Inbox in Wolf and are instantly available for review. Nothing gets lost”

Making the Move from Paper to EMR

With so many charts to move over to the electronic system, Dr. Lim devised a game plan to ease their transition to EMR. Six months prior to “going live,” they hired an additional medical office assistant who was well versed in data entry and medical terminology. “We spent six months entering basic information from our patient’s paper charts into the system, including patient demographic data, problem lists, medications, and allergies – to form the basis of our EMR data going forward.”

“When we went live with our EMR solution, most the essential information for the majority of our patients was already in the database,” explained Dr. Lim. For the first year they still entered





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missing patient information into the system on a regular basis; on average they still need to reference three to four paper charts per day. To assist physicians in the first few months, they assigned one of their medical assistants, who entered the chief complaint, past history, medication list and allergies into the EMR for patients who were being seen for the first time. This was a timesaver for the physicians, who only need to verify and edit the data during the visit. Eventually, they found that this process became unnecessary as the physicians became more proficient with the software. "I would never go back to paper. I would never work in a clinic without an EMR," said Dr. Lim.

Proactively Managing Patients with Chronic Diseases

The physicians at Metrohealth are beginning to make more extensive use of the Chronic Disease Management flowsheets and templates in Wolf to proactively manage the approximately 20% of their total number of their patients with chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, congestive heart failure, and asthma. "We want to be sure that recommended lab work is completed, that we're following up on these patients and checking their parameters on a regular basis. Using Wolf Practice Search we will be able to track how many patients did not come back for recommended follow-ups, such as 3 month visits for hemoglobin A1c testing. Wolf gives us the tools to search our patient records and be much more proactive in our patient management as compared to paper-based practices." He added, "We find it's easy to complete the various fields in the CDM templates quickly. This is a real timesaver when it comes to completing provincial flowsheets - I think we're saving a few minutes per patient by using Wolf to complete them."

Dr. Lim also maintains a private practice for a number of production and manufacturing companies, conducting pre-employment physicals for new employees. He also sees a number of visiting patients who come to work in the area temporarily and need high quality medical care while they are away from their own family doctor. He keeps track of these patients in the Wolf EMR and likes the flexibility of being able to private bill third parties or patients directly out of the Wolf system. He also likes the fact that while he may not see some of these patients often he can quickly access their electronic chart and be completely up to speed before he meets with them. "It's great as I'm able to access charts from home and complete work that I can't finish at the office; it also supports my private practice outside the clinic. It's very flexible."

Top Benefits for Metrohealth Clinic

- Improved access to 70,000 patient records for physicians and staff from the office or home
- Reduced storage requirements for patient records
- Improved chart legibility and completeness – information never goes missing
- Proactive management of patients with chronic diseases
- Save a few minutes per patient encounter to complete provincial CDM flowsheets
- Manage private and public patients with a single EMR

