

PEDIATRICS

BBSMD

Alexander City, Alabama

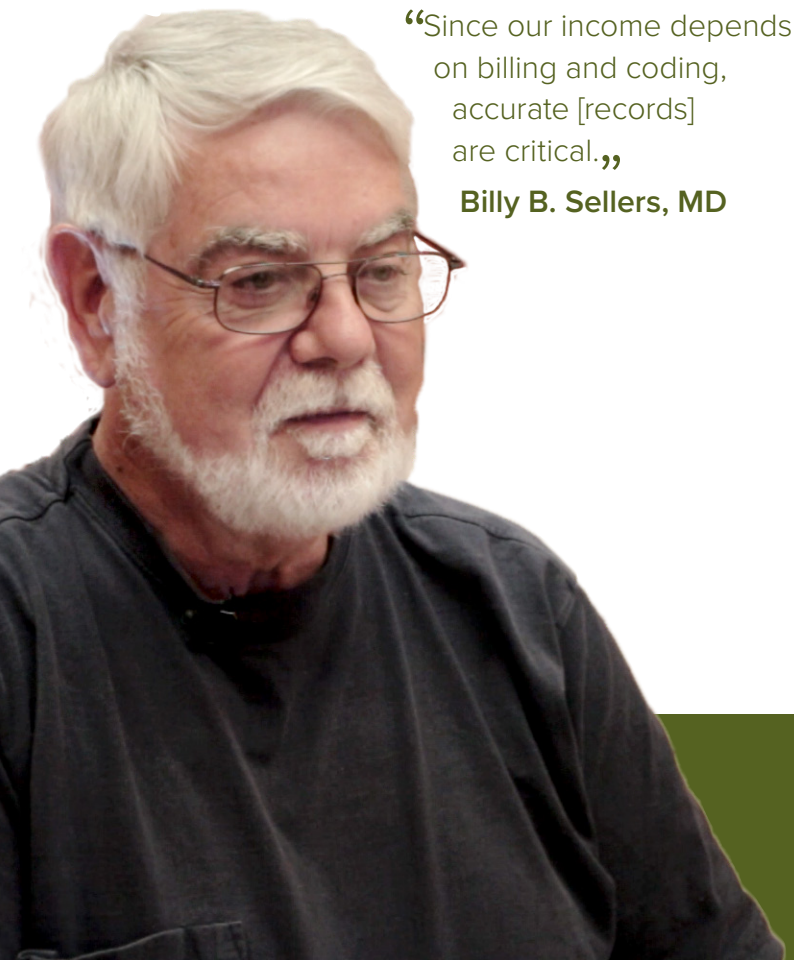
CLINIC PROFILE

Providers: Billy B. Sellers, MD

Specialties Served: Pediatrics

AdvancedMD Client Since: 2010

Practice Highlights: After beginning his medical career as a researcher and academic, Dr. Sellers returned to his hometown of Alexander City, Alabama, to establish his private practice. The Sellers Medical Group emphasizes the importance of meaningful interactions and patient relationships—a challenge for a practice that provides full pediatric care for forty to sixty patients per day.



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ABSTRACT

Technological inefficiencies and redundancies were threatening the financial health and patient experience of this busy pediatric office. The practice adopted the AdvancedMD Practice Management solution to improve billing and scheduling processes. After two failed EHR systems through other providers, the practice later adopted AdvancedMD for an all-in-one technology system. Together, the platforms are a comprehensive, cloud solution to billing, scheduling, practice management, ePrescribing, immunization management, and claim submission.

THE PROBLEM

Chaotic Scheduling

Pediatric scheduling can be more difficult than other specialties according to office manager Johnette Lamborne. “You can’t base your patient load on yesterday,” she says. “We don’t know if we’re going to have 60 patients or 40 patients.” She admits that their former scheduling system was inadequate, especially with unpredictable demand. “Scheduling was very chaotic. The program that we had before was not efficient in changing, moving, cancelling, or adding appointments.”

Parents demanding same-day appointment for their children compounds scheduling problems for pediatric offices. “As adults we will wait or let things pass, but with our children we want them seen immediately,” explains Lamborne. With the outdated scheduling software, office staff struggled to manage demand and accommodate work-ins.

Inadequate EHR Systems

The Sellers Medical Group found that choosing an EHR to comply with new Medicare and Medicaid regulations wasn’t an easy task. Investing in the wrong EHR caused significant problems for his small practice, claims Dr. Sellers: “The first [EHR] never got off the ground. The second company went bankrupt within three to four months after I installed it.”

The lack of interoperability posed another challenge for the practice as the failed EHR systems had not interfaced with his scheduling and billing software. Dr. Sellers saw staff hours wasted on entering patient information into multiple systems. He was also concerned about maintaining accurate health histories across numerous platforms. “There is more room for error,” he explains, “and, since our income depends on billing and coding, accurate [records] are critical.”

Time-Intensive Immunization and Prescription Management

Tracking immunizations and prescriptions was a cumbersome undertaking for the busy pediatric clinic. Providing parents with an immunization history was a chore with their former system, recalls Lamborne. “We were not able to record immunizations and print a copy of current immunizations for patients’ parents to take with them,” she remembers. The system did not notify staff of upcoming immunizations, only those a patient had

already received. Required state documentation was also done by hand without an automatic reporting feature.

The use of paper prescriptions and medication tracking presented similar difficulties. “Parents would call to request list of current medications,” says Lamborne. They did not have a quick or efficient method to provide patients with updated records. Additionally, Dr. Sellers and his staff spent hours writing paper prescriptions and manually sending refills.

Clumsy Claim Submission

Although they understood billing issues existed, Lamborne said they didn’t realize how severely they were impacting the bottom line. “We were not sending all of our claims to the clearinghouse—if one claim in the batch was wrong none of the claims were sent,” she explains. The system they were using did not notify them of the lost claims.

This inefficiency was depleting profits unbeknownst to staff. “We probably lost over \$40,000 in two months just because we couldn’t send claims,” Lamborne claims, “We didn’t know [the claims weren’t sent] until checks stopped arriving.” She knew that over time this error would have threatened the survival of the practice.

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The AdvancedMD Solution

The Sellers Medical Group adopted the AdvancedMD practice management (PM) solution in 2010 to address billing, claim submission, and scheduling inefficiencies that impacted the patient experience and financial health of the practice.

After two failed EHR systems, Dr. Sellers chose AdvancedMD to provide him with an all-in-one solution. “I think one of the reasons we were attracted to AdvancedMD is that it is an integrated practice management and medical records system,” he says, “That’s where I see the biggest advantage.”

In 2011, the AdvancedMD EHR was implemented to modernize patient histories, manage immunizations and prescriptions, and allow more time for the most important aspect of the practice—engaging with patients.

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THE OUTCOME

Intelligent Scheduling

Lamborne has enjoyed a significant improvement in the scheduling process. “As a pediatric office we have optimized our scheduling with AdvancedMD; for the first time we have been able to allot specific times for consultations, well visits, and sick visits,” she reports. The practice has also been able to better accommodate work-ins with the new scheduling features.

Using the new Recall feature of AdvancedMD has saved the practice over \$2,400 per year by eliminating the need for outsourced reminder calls. Recall provides an easy-to-use method for tracking patients for follow-up visits that can be scheduled at the point of care. Timely reminders are sent automatically through the system improving patient satisfaction and reducing no-shows.

Powerfully Integrated EHR

“It’s been interesting and really a little exciting to see what the institution of AdvancedMD EHR has done to help us organize,” says Dr. Sellers. He appreciates how the PM and EHR software provide a seamless solution. Lamborne sees how the AdvancedMD EHR has improved workflow and saved time: “Our workflow has diminished as far as the redundancies, having to do the back-and-click here or check on this and check on that—it’s all right there!”

Smarter Immunization and Medication Tracking

The Sellers Medical Group saw the benefits of electronic prescribing and immunization tracking immediately. Immunization tracking hassles are a thing of the past according to Lamborne: “It’s wonderful because we can pull up the screen [of immunization information] print it out and see exactly which one the patient needs.” Immunization histories and state-required forms are easily created in AdvancedMD for parents to review or submit to schools.

Electronic prescription management has also improved patient service. “We send [the prescription] to the pharmacy electronically and there’s no paper involved. I find that the system has less room for error,” says Dr. Sellers. Parents are also able to access prescription information online through the AdvancedMD Patient Portal. They can request refills or schedule an appointment if they need a prescription renewed through the portal.

Revenue-Building Billing and Claim Submission

Soon after adopting AdvancedMD, the lost claims that would have cost the practice over \$40,000 were uncovered. “If we hadn’t been able to recoup [the money] with AdvancedMD it would have been really bad for business—I actually don’t know if we could have survived,” Lamborne explains.

AdvancedMD Claim Inspector identifies claim submission problems before claims are sent to the payor. Now office staff is notified immediately if there is an error in a claim. The practice has maximized revenue by successfully submitting both new and old claims and collecting unbilled payments.

What Matter Most

Dr. Sellers believes the most impactful benefit of partnering with AdvancedMD is a better patient experience. “It’s not just the amount of time you spend with [a patient], it’s the quality of time,”

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he describes. “There are a lot of aspects to healing; I think the encounter is equally important if not more important than what the patient leaves with from the pharmacy,” he continues.

Like with his patients, Dr. Sellers appreciates the relationship he has built with AdvancedMD. “I will say that we’ve had an unusual amount of support – tech support of course – but also encouragement from AdvancedMD in terms of developing a unique system that actually works for our practice,” he says.

Lamborne agrees that they have spent less money and time on managing inefficiencies and technology hassles in the office: “We were spending more with other software and not getting that support that we needed. With [AdvancedMD] the support is awesome.” She has noticed a significant improvement to the bottom line as well. “It has helped us tremendously as far as our return on investment – I would highly recommend AdvancedMD for that reason,” she explains.

AdvancedMD has allowed Dr. Sellers to recommit to building meaningful relationships with his patients. Without wasting hours on software, numbers, and operations, he is maximizing his financial health and improving his bottom line. Now Dr. Sellers is able to do what he does best and engage with his young patients: “I need to make a living, but money is never on my mind.”