

## FAMILY PRACTICE

### William W. Forgey, MD

Merrillville, Indiana

#### CLINIC PROFILE

**Providers:** One Physician, One nurses practitioner

**Specialties Served:** Family Practice, International Travel Medicine

**AdvancedMD Client Since:** 2006

**Technology Profile:** AdvancedMD billing and practice management systems running in a cloud environment and poised for implementation of the AdvancedMD integrated EHR in the near future. Solution includes: scheduling, eEligibility, electronic charge capture and comprehensive claims and billing management. Users access the system securely anytime, from anywhere via an Internet-connected computer.

**Practice Highlights:** Complete family practice medicine particularly suited to a higher percentage of aging population. A secondary practice focuses on international travel medicine, providing services and inoculations for a wide range of exotic diseases without the need to wait for special-ordered vaccines and treatments. Dr. Forgey is also a published author of a number of popular books, and an active provider of care in international disaster situations, having played a key role in 14 missions to date, including extensive work in Haiti.

“We have everything on the charge slip. I use it as a form of management planning and follow-up to assist with the care of the patient. Essentially, it becomes my recall list.”

**William Forgey, MD**

#### ABSTRACT

This busy family practice has deep roots in the community it has served for more than three decades. Over the years, growing claims and billing complexity, increasingly complicated scheduling, and Dr. Forgey's outside projects demanded an automated solution. The practice first implemented an outsourced service—a move that proved to be unacceptably expensive, inefficient, and frustrating to both staff and patients. A search for a cloud-based, highly sophisticated billing and scheduling solution (that would easily integrate with EHR in the near future) resulted in the selection of AdvancedMD. Claims, billing and scheduling now run at peak efficiency, patient satisfaction is up, and the practice is well positioned for easy migration to the AdvancedMD EHR solution. Dr. Forgey states, “The system is an extremely big reason I've been able to pull off what I have over the past number of years.”

#### THE PROBLEM

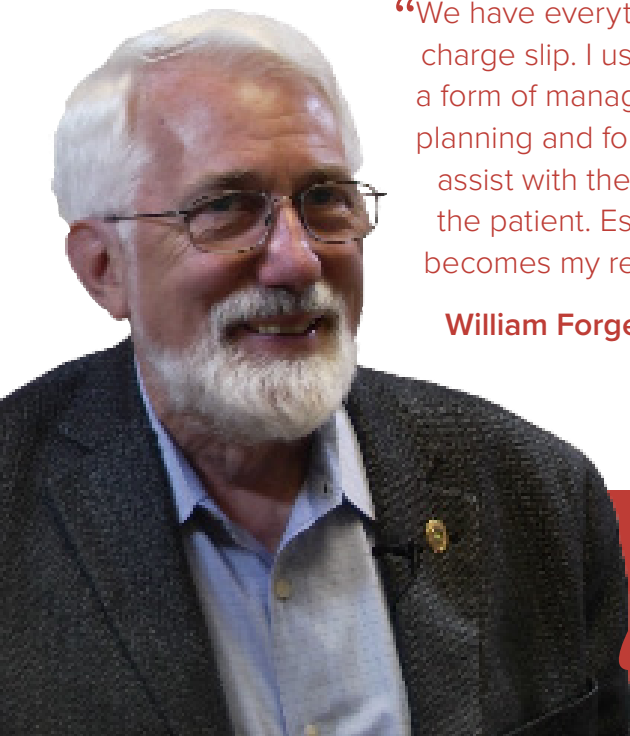
Dr. William Forgey's diverse practice requirements reflect the broad array of interests and services he and his staff pursue not only in the northwestern area of Indiana, but often to people in or traveling to distant parts of the world. In addition to a busy family medicine practice, Dr. Forgey runs a secondary practice specializing in international medicine. Additionally, he is highly involved in international relief missions – playing a key role in 14 missions to date, including Haiti – and is an active published author of a number of popular books.

The volume and diversity of work undertaken by Dr. Forgey and his staff presented a significant challenge from a scheduling and billing standpoint. “Because of the complexities of the practices and the increasing time demands of other activities, we needed some mechanization and automation to stay ahead,” said Dr. Forgey.

The practice had previously been part of a small hospital system that provided outsourced billing services. This system proved highly frustrating for the staff as well as patients, and over time became a financial drain on the practice. “The system was a nightmare,” said Paula Hernandez, office manager for the practice. “We couldn't get direct access to patient billing questions, and patients became very upset and angry. And, it was down a lot, which didn't help.”

The financial impact was even more significant. “It became quite expensive, costing \$2,500 per month just for the billing portion,” said Dr. Forgey. “And, I had no control over what they were doing— like writing off bills 90 days out so their ratios looked good. I lost the ability to track and control my past-due debt. The whole thing was quickly becoming a quagmire of legal and governmental responsibility.”

Scheduling was equally chaotic. “The doc would just tell people to come in because he didn't have access to the schedule and we weren't right there,” said Hernandez. “Plus, managing family scheduling in a small community like this is especially challenging – to keep people from even being seen in the parking lot by a relation gets very tricky. It was crazy.”



## The AdvancedMD Solution

In order to address these challenges, Dr. Forgey conducted software search with these distinct criteria in mind:

- Sophisticated, comprehensive billing that easily handles all payer types, rules and exceptions, provides robust reporting and payables management, and significantly reduces the cost of billing and claims management
- Simple, powerful scheduling that accommodates multiple practices, users and appointment types
- Anytime, anywhere access, minimal onsite computer equipment, and offsite data storage and backup
- A clear, integrated path to a robust, proven EHR

The practice found that the AdvancedMD cloud practice management system most closely matched these demanding criteria. The hosted system provides anytime, anywhere access to select staff members without the need for additional on-site servers and computer equipment. It also provides one of the most sophisticated claims, billing and scheduling solutions available, all for a single, competitive monthly fee. And full integration with a robust EHR provides a simple migration path to a complete electronic solution.

### THE OUTCOME

The system dramatically reduced billing cost while improving accuracy, workflow efficiency and patient satisfaction. Scheduling issues virtually disappeared, and anytime, anywhere access keeps the entire practice on top of all key patient-related matters. "I have a diverse practice, and a broad set of personal interests," said Dr. Forgey. "The system is an extremely big reason I've been able to pull off what I have over the past number of years."

#### Billing Nirvana

The billing system gives the practice greater control over the entire claims process at a much lower cost, and allows Dr. Forgey to appropriately manage receivables. "gives me complete control over my billing. I can write off debt when I want to, not when someone else decides to."

Cost of the billing solution dropped significantly – from \$2,500/month to about \$500/month. Front desk personnel were also freed from many billing tasks that detracted from their main responsibilities. "The system's ability handle just the mechanics of tracking complex partial payments, co-payments, different contract rates, etc. was way beyond anything else I could find at this price," added Dr. Forgey.

That level of detail and accuracy is evident in every transaction and process workflow built into the system. The practice finds the dashboard and claims management system especially powerful. "AdvancedMD is like our little cheat sheet," said Laura, Bsonka, billing manager for the practice. "It helps us pinpoint the areas that need to be addressed and gives us the information we need to resolve the issues. It really keeps us on our toes."

Patient satisfaction has also improved. "The billing is accurate, and details and receipts are available right at checkout, or anytime a patient calls in," said Kathy Creech, receptionist. "We can track EOBs and answer patient questions immediately. We love it, and they love it!"

#### Cloud Mobility Benefits

The mobility and flexibility provided by the AdvancedMD cloud solution significantly improves the practice's ability to operate

efficiently, reduce risk, and better address patient needs.

"Another really good thing about the process is the remote access," said Dr. Forgey. "If this place blew up, if we had major electronic failure or a virus gets into the system, I'm protected from that whole thing. It solved a huge headache for us, and is a major reason for not going in-house with a big server system here, but instead, staying remote with a professionally-operated electronic billing system."

#### Smooth Scheduling

The advanced features, flexibility and anytime-access of the scheduling solution have turned complex scheduling tasks into smooth, efficient workflows for all involved. "Even with this busy, busy practice, I'm able to get people quickly scheduled – or rescheduled – into convenient available time slots. It's a lifesaver!" said receptionist Creech. "I get them quickly scheduled, quickly checked in, checked out, rescheduled and daily visit details handled all in one simple system. When they leave and I forward the chart, it's all done. Billing takes it from there."

The remote access has also improved scheduling for the staff, doctor and the patients he speaks to personally, which is an important part of the personal touch in his practice. "If a patient calls after hours, we can schedule an open time slot on the spot rather than making them call back the next day," said Hernandez. "And doctor can look at his schedule and offer patients an actual open time slot, rather than asking them to come to the office the next day and hoping for the best – the way we used to do it."

#### Specialized Tracking

Dr. Forgey's international travel practice is one of the few locations in a large surrounding area that provides inoculations for exotic overseas travel. This includes having specialized vaccines – such as yellow fever – in stock so patients don't have to wait. "We see travel patients from a wide, multi-state area," said Hernandez. "AdvancedMD can track and report on inoculations given, which helps us manage stock on-hand as well as improve our ordering efficiency."

## SUMMARY

Dr. Forgey plans to move the practice to the AdvancedMD EHR at an appropriate time in the near future. “has been uniquely suited to my family practice in providing a very inexpensive, appropriate billing solution. We’ve worked with that solution for more than six years now, so the conversion to an EHR should be relatively smooth.”

One immediate benefit Dr. Forgey foresees in the move to an electronic record directly addresses a challenge unique to family practice. “I deal with a lot of specialists in situations where I’m referring. To be able to provide a full electronic medical record to my consulting physicians will be a tremendous help to the practice.”