

The Pain Care Center

Rock Springs, Wyoming

Clinic profile

Providers: Jed Shay, MD

Technology Profile: The Pain Care Center implemented AdvancedMD electronic health record (EHR) and practice management (PM) in 2011 for an all-in-one alternative to outdated, paper-centered systems.

Practice Highlights: The Pain Care Center offers treatment for chronic pain. In a medium-sized city, Dr. Shay and his staff serve rural patients who travel hours for treatment. With only one provider, the Pain Care Center serves up to 30 patients per day and continues to grow.

Abstract

This busy, one-provider pain management facility sought an all-in-one solution to practice management and EHR. Boggled down by outdated protocols and systems, they sought a modern, efficient answer to managing billing, scheduling, health records, and staffing concerns. The Pain Care Center chose AdvancedMD for its leading EHR, easy-to-learn interface, comprehensive features, and superior customizability.

The problem

Getting left behind

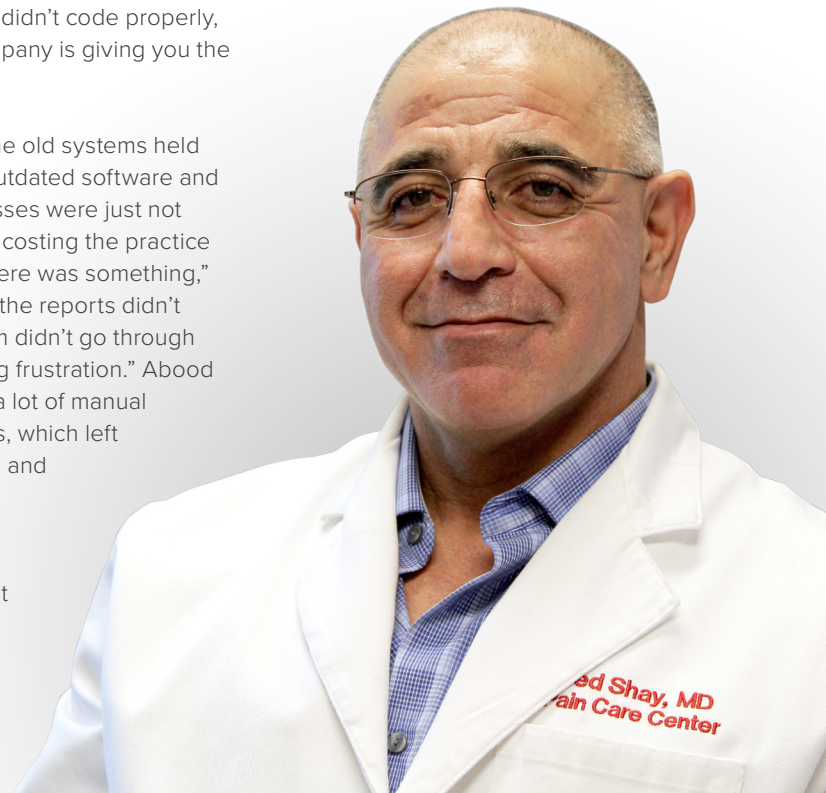
With an average of 25-30 patients per day for one provider, the staff and doctor at the Pain Care Center struggled to keep their heads above water. Outdated management and charting models were not meeting the needs of Dr. Shay, his staff, or his patients. Simply put, maintaining the status quo was threatening Dr. Shay's ability to practice medicine.

The staff had a difficult time even maintaining an accurate schedule. "People would show up," recalls Mona Abood, office and billing manager, "and we wouldn't be able to see them for one reason or another." Without automated, intuitive scheduling features, staff was often left feeling embarrassed when patients had to reschedule. Outdated billing procedures were also not doing any favors for the profitability of Dr. Shay's office. Without an electronic method to submit claims, the provider was not getting paid for all of his work. He recalls how it felt

receiving notice of claim denials: "Nothing is more disappointing than spending time providing care and then realizing that you are not getting paid because you didn't do your homework, you didn't code properly, or the insurance company is giving you the runaround."

Abood agrees that the old systems held the practice back. Outdated software and manual billing processes were just not cutting it – and were costing the practice money. "Everyday there was something," Abood remembers, "the reports didn't look right or the claim didn't go through clean – it was one big frustration." Abood said billing required a lot of manual time and duplications, which left her feeling frustrated and uncertain of her accuracy.

The inability to collect outstanding claims





also impacted the bottom line. Abood felt like she was up against an unwinnable battle: “It was outrageous and no matter how hard I tried to work it, I could never get caught up.” This meant that the Pain Care Center was leaving money on the table each month.

Throwing people at problems

Managing staff was no easy feat for Dr. Shay. “I went to medical school to care for patients,” he says, “not to manage people.” He found that staffing concerns compounded the problems with outdated software and piles of paper: “As a physician, you end up managing your people and paper charts instead of your patients.”

Energy that should’ve been directed towards care was diverted to train employees, most of who stayed for only a few short months. A stream of revolving-door staffers was draining the limited resources – both time and money – from the small practice.

Additionally, most billing scheduling tasks were done manually, such as opening mail for insurance payments and hand-enter superbills. “Efficiency was low,” said Abood, “we needed to throw people at it all the time.” But more people – up to seven at one point – didn’t reduce inefficiencies and inflated the staffing budget.

To make matters worse, Dr. Shay found

that staff often didn’t complete these tedious tasks. “I cannot tell you how many times I’ve found superbills or referral forms that haven’t been processed in a drawer after a staff member left,” he recalls.

Paper charts also demanded hours each week of staff time. “When you deal with paper charts,” Dr. Shay says, “you throw people at problems.” Outdated filing systems required Dr. Shay to increase the number of staff, who often felt burdened with the piles and piles of paper. The room for error was also great with paper charts, according to Dr. Shay: “Paper charts require a lot of resources and room for a lot of mistakes – it’s very hard to put checks and balances on people.”

Operating on “hope”

Dr. Shay never felt confident with his outdated paper-centered practice management and health record systems. Paper charts were one of his primary concerns – he found himself hoping he would have the information that he needed when meeting with his chronic pain patients. “When you work with paper charts,” he explains, “you are always hoping that information is there, that it is accurate, and that it was filed properly and in a timely fashion.”

All too frequently these hopes did not materialize, and his concerns didn’t end with paper charts. Dr. Shay and his staff had similar hesitations about revenue management. Still using paper charge

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slips and submitting insurance claims by mail, the Pain Care Center staff found themselves hoping they would get paid for the services provided.

“I was hoping I circled the right CPT code and that the charge sheet was entered at the end of the day,” explained Dr. Shay. Billing staff would then process the claim manually and submit it to the insurance company by mail, never fully knowing if there was an error on the claim or if they would receive payment in full.

Without complete confidence in how his practice was operating, Dr. Shay found his attitude about practice medicine was impacted. When asked what his practice was like before AdvancedMD, he replied, “Chaos! I had one of the better practices, I would like to think, but how I practiced medicine before AdvancedMD just doesn’t compare to how I am able to practice now.”

The AdvancedMD solution

Tired of struggling with daily operations, Dr. Shay was committed to find a solution that would meet his current needs as well as support him in future growth. An integrated, modern solution was needed to make the Pain Care Center efficient and profitable. Dr. Shay found that with AdvancedMD.

The Pain Care Center adopted both AdvancedMD platforms in 2011 to address their practice management needs as well as provide the office with their first electronic health records.

AdvancedMD leveraged technological solutions to modernize practice operations, provide exceptional access to health information, and mitigate staffing concerns. All of which has boosted confidence in their patient care.

“AdvancedMD is so flexible,” Dr. Shay reports, “it has allowed me to take the platform and customize it to suit my needs – it’s a good choice.”

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The outcome

In only two years, the Pain Care Center has gone from status quo to top-of-class. Billing and claim processing improvements have added more to the bottom line, employee efficiency has been boosted to over 90%, and staffing costs have been cut in half.

Scheduling concerns have been nearly eliminated, which means the Pain Care Center is able to capture more revenue. This lean-operating, one-provider practice has been able to add more than eight new patients per week – an impressive 400 new patients annually – with fewer staff and decreased overhead.

Out of the past, ready for the future

Dr. Shay credits AdvancedMD for bringing his practice out of the past. “You’re going to have a hard time as a physician staying in practice if you continue to do things the old ways,” he warns. Dr. Shay now has a modern, streamlined system that was customized for his practice: “With AdvancedMD, I have designed a system

fundamentally and correctly from the ground up.”

AdvancedMD has given Dr. Shay the tools to keep up with changing times for private practices. ICD-10 changes don’t even have him worried. “I get emails everyday asking me what I am going to do with ICD-10,” he says, “but I just laugh, because with AdvancedMD all I have to do is update my custom templates with new codes – no biggie.”

Scheduling is no longer a headache for the Pain Care Center. Dr. Shay now feels like he is in control of his appointments: “I love the scheduling; each schedule is linked to a specific note, so I have a good idea what my day is going to look like.”

AdvancedMD has also greatly diminished the number of no shows. Using Proximiti, an automated call reminder service provided by AdvancedMD, has resulted in a more than 30% decrease in missed appointments. “Proximiti lets me know that

the patient was contacted,” Dr. Shay says, “We have 99 to 100% of our patients show each day.”

Rows of paper charts have been eliminated and replaced with secure, comprehensive health histories in the AdvancedMD EHR. Dr. Shay and his staff were able to establish an almost completely paperless office. “There is hardly, hardly any paper,” Abood jokes, “and we complain about the minimal paper we have now!”

Dr. Shay agrees that paper charts will soon be a thing of the past. “Either you invest in EHR or you give up and stay with paper charts,” he says, “but if you do that, you will waste your time for the rest of your life.”

AdvancedMD has allowed Abood to complete billing and claim submission with just a few clicks, rather than wasting hours on manual processes. “AdvancedMD is like a biller’s and collector’s dream-come-true

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moment!” she exclaims, “Now it’s like a true best friend.” Using electronic eligibility and submissions features have cut time spent on billing by half.

Fewer staff, more patients

AdvancedMD made an incredible impact on Dr. Shay’s staffing concerns. In less than two years he was able to cut his employee wage expenditure by 50%. “I used to run my practice with seven people,” he explains, “now I’m able to do it with three.”

With AdvancedMD, a small staff is able to manage up to 30 appointments per day. Abood credits AdvancedMD for this superior efficiency. “I attribute our ability to run the practice with such a small staff to our streamlined system – AdvancedMD,” she says. Dr. Shay and Abood believe the practice is operating at 90% or more efficiency, up from 60% according to their benchmarking.

Also, Abood thinks adopting the PM and EHR systems at the same time allowed them to get operations on track quickly. “It made sense that if the systems worked well together then implement both, instead of doing it in bits and pieces,” she recalls.

Dr. Shay appreciates how AdvancedMD has allowed him to streamline his staff and operations. A smaller team requires less management, which means he can focus on what he does best – practicing medicine. “As a physician, I don’t want to be responsible for managing people and their issues,” he claims, “this is a practice and we want to take care of patients.”

Enhanced efficiency means more patients – over 400 more per year – can be helped at the Pain Care Center. But seeing more patients isn’t just about cash flow – it is a critical advantage for a medium-sized, rural community. The increased number of appointments eliminates the need for chronic-pain sufferers to travel up to four



hours to the next closest pain management facility. “These are good people with serious medical problems and they deserve to be treated in their hometown,” reflects Dr. Shay.

Better access, confidence in care

Access has been the central key to improving the patient experience at the Pain Care Center. “I can definitely tell you that I have become a better doctor by the mere fact that I have more information available when I walk into a room,” explains Dr. Shay.

To Dr. Shay, improving care has been the most important benefit from AdvancedMD. Access to patients’ complete health histories at his fingertips, anytime of day, allows Dr. Shay to provide a higher level of care. And, according to the doctor, patients have noticed.

“With AdvancedMD I have the information available at my fingertips; it makes me more knowledgeable,” he says, “patients see that and appreciate it.” In seconds, Dr. Shay can access complete health histories on a laptop or tablet so that he is prepared to engage with patients as soon as he enters the examination room.

AdvancedMD also gave Dr. Shay more confidence in how his practice was managed – he no longer needs to operate on hope. He has a better understanding of revenue management, which has empowered him to create a more profitable business. “I now have an understanding of the practice management, and I encourage every doctor to do that,” he explains.



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Dr. Shay knows that he is getting paid for his work, not just hoping that he will. Using electronic charge capture from AdvancedMD, Dr. Shay has ditched paper charge slips and enters charges at the point of service in customized templates specific to his services. Additionally, he is able to verify billing tasks have been completed for all patients at the end of each day.

AdvancedMD has given Dr. Shay control of his practice like never before. This insight has improved how he views his work. “The

most important thing is being happy with what you are doing,” he states, “Any tool that gives me the ability to like what I do more is welcome in my practice.”

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Conclusion

Dr. Shay is certain that AdvancedMD has been an integral part of improving patient care and the efficiency in his practice. “When I look at how I used to practice medicine before compared to now,” he explains, “the difference is night and day.”

Since adopting AdvancedMD two years ago, the Pain Care Center has been able to serve over an additional 400 patients each year, staff costs have been cut in half, and efficiency has reached approximately 90%. All of which have added significant revenue to the bottom line.

Perhaps most importantly, with AdvancedMD Dr. Shay now feels like he is in control of his future. When many doctors are abandoning private practice for the perceived security of larger groups or hospitals, Dr. Shay has never felt more confident: “I’m in total control of my practice, in total control of my cost and my revenue.”

AdvancedMD gave the Pain Care Center the practice management and EHR tools to prosper in a difficult time for private practice. “I don’t want to give up my independence,” Dr. Shay says, “because I

failed to manage my practice, when the right technology gives me the options to do that – and I cannot operate my practice without AdvancedMD.” Dr. Shay is confident in the future success of the Pain Care Center. He knows that AdvancedMD has provided him with a high return on investment and given him the tools to remain profitable. He explains, “The money I have invested in AdvancedMD is miniscule compared to the return. I have never been more efficient – ever – in my professional life as I am now.”

