

Thomas Miller, MD

Arlington, TX

Providers: Solo family practice physician + 2 FTE

Specialty served: Family practice

AdvancedMD client since: 2012

TECHNOLOGY PROFILE

Dr. Miller became an early adopter of clinic automation when he installed his first practice management system in 1994. An EMR from a separate vendor was added in 2003. The clinic ran with this configuration for nearly 15 years, until the EMR vendor withdrew from the business, forcing the practice to seek a replacement system. A thorough search of the market yielded a short list of best-fit candidates. Based on a clear set of specific criteria, AdvancedMD was selected as the best solution overall. The clinic runs the entire AdvancedMD integrated suite, including Billing/claims, practice management, EHR, patient portal, mobile doc, and the Rhythm data integration and management dashboard solution – all on a highly secure cloud-based platform.

PRACTICE HIGHLIGHTS

A number of years ago, Dr. Miller joined a seasoned medical group as the new junior member. Over the next several years the other doctors retired, and Dr. Miller decided to continue to run the clinic as a solo practice, offering a full range of family practice services. The clinic has always relied on solid technology to assist this conscientious physician in offering patients efficient, high-quality healthcare.

LONG HISTORY OF AUTOMATION

As a self-described “computer nerd”, Dr. Miller has played an integral role in the clinic’s automation throughout its history. As such, he clearly understands the key role technology plays in delivering high quality health services, particularly in a solo practice setting. When practice management software first started to become generally available, Dr. Miller adopted a system in 1994 to help automate the claims, billing, and scheduling functions in the office.

He continued to stay on the leading edge of technology adoption, installing an EMR system in 2003, long before incentives and the broader market moved in that direction. Being first with new technology is exciting, but not without its challenges and growing

pains. “We had our share of issues to work through in getting the systems to do their jobs and not get in the way of clinical care,” said Dr. Miller. “But I’ve always said that if you want to be on the cutting edge of technology, you have to do a little bleeding.”

The perseverance and “bleeding” with the technology paid off with systems that served the practice well for over 20 years. Then, in 2017 the clinic’s EMR vendor announced they were withdrawing from the business and would no longer support the software. Dr. Miller was again put into the position of evaluating and selecting automation that would serve the clinic for years into the future.



After evaluating a broad range of practice automation systems, Dr. Miller selected AdvancedMD as the best fit for his practice.

Although AdvancedMD performed well across the spectrum of criteria, several features stand out as particularly important to the clinic's operation.

Patient Portal. The portal is simple, intuitive and quickly adopted by most patients. It gives them visibility into their personal information, labs, medications, and up-to-date payment and account balance data. "It's a simple way for patients to communicate with me," said Dr. Miller. "Because it's asynchronous, we can each respond on our own schedules rather than playing endless phone tag. We have 70 and 80-year-old patients who use it and love it."

Complete integration. The AdvancedMD natively integrates all aspects of the system so information is easily shared across the platform. "This system is better integrated than any other I looked at," said Dr. Miller. "Information is accessible and shared virtually anywhere I need it, whether it be clinical, fax, practice management, patient portal communication – it's all right there precisely when and where I need it. It just works better together."

Revenue Cycle Management. Since converting to AdvancedMD, the practice has reduced time to reimbursement, resulting in better cash flow. "Handling the EOBs is much easier and faster," said Dr. Miller. "And because patients can check balances and payments, we have fewer billing-related phone inquiries to handle."

Mobile Connectivity. The AdvancedMD works seamlessly on mobile devices, freeing the doctor to focus on the patient rather than the computer. "It's very important for me to give my patients my full attention, and not be distracted interacting with a computer rather than with them," said Dr. Miller. "With Advanced Mobile I can glance at an iPad and be fully informed while still focusing on the patient relationship. Patients like that."

Cloud-Based. Moving the server systems and data out of the clinic into a cloud configuration was another big win for the clinic. "Not only is it more secure, it took a major time burden off my shoulders making sure the system was running, updated, and backed up. With AdvancedMD in the cloud, I don't even think about it any more."

Single Vendor Support. Many practices underestimate the importance of solid technical support for their new system. "Resolving technical issues that come up can be time consuming and frustrating, particularly with multiple vendors involved," said Dr. Miller. "With AdvancedMD I have one company to go to, and their service has been great."

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

To date, the AdvancedMD has lived up to Dr. Miller's demanding expectations. "It's one thing to check off the criteria on paper, and quite another to actually deliver the functionality that supports our daily routines," he said.

"The transition to AdvancedMD has been smooth and relatively painless. It's taken us to another level of automation and efficiency – a long way from where we started with our systems in the 90s."

DR. MILLER'S CLINIC AUTOMATION SELECTION CRITERIA

Years of experience with practice automation put Dr. Miller in a strong position to thoroughly vet the many possible replacement candidates available. Over time, he developed a clear set of selection criteria that helped narrow the options to those systems most capable of meeting the clinic's specific needs.

The list includes these criteria:

- **Cloud-based**
- **Comprehensive system**, including billing/claims, practice management, eligibility, EHR, patient portal, mobile doc, e-prescribing and robust reporting
- **Completely integrated**, so data is seamlessly shared between all components of the system
- **Patient-friendly portal with access to personal**, clinical and insurance/payment information
- **Integrated communication** for the doctor to respond to patients (e.g. web, email, fax, text)
- **Mobile and tablet support** – important for patient face time relationship
- **Pricing: competitive** monthly fee vs. long-term contract, expensive or complex pricing schemes based on percentage of gross, number of patients, etc.
- **Single vendor technical support** – a single vendor solution eliminates finger pointing and complications inherent in multi-vendor implementations.