

Dragon® Medical Enterprise

Metro Health: Successful Epic® Deployment Relies on Dragon Medical Enterprise

Advanced Professional Services and Workflow Consulting Delivers Highly Productive Physicians Dictating Directly into Epic's EMR, EpicCare®

Metro Health, an advanced health system in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is successfully deploying Epic's EMR, EpicCare across both its acute care and ambulatory care settings. By making Dragon Medical Enterprise an integral part of this rollout, Metro Health physicians have reported substantial time savings and more complete clinical documentation.

As part of this project, Metro Health and Nuance Professional Services engaged Physician Technology Partners (PTP), a leading electronic health record (EHR) and speech recognition consultancy to design workflow and configure Dragon Medical Enterprise and Epic for optimized clinical documentation.

Metro Health has also reported saving approximately \$1 million in transcription costs annually during this joint Epic-Dragon Medical Enterprise deployment. Today, close to 100 physicians throughout the health system from the ED, general surgery, neurology, GI, intensivists and hospitalist departments, use Epic and Dragon Medical Enterprise.

"At Metro Health, we're committed to delivering on a totally digital vision for patient care and clinical information systems, to provide secure, up-to-date clinical documentation that flows across all departments to all care teams."

—Bill Lewkowski
Chief Information Officer
Metro Health

Our guideline was very simple: No training, no privileges to the hospital. We gave physicians just 90 days of paid-for dictation and transcription services, and then we took it away. Our physicians knew that on day 91 their choices were keyboard and mouse with templates, or speech recognition.

—Dr. Bradley Clegg
Chief Medical Informatics Officer
Metro Health

“Our strategy is to deploy technology around the patient, by implementing an integrated solution with advanced clinical workflows.”

—**Bill Lewkowski**
Chief Information Officer
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Metro Health’s electronic health record (EHR) vision has been realized in a successful multi-year joint EpicCare–**Dragon Medical Enterprise** implementation extending across the greater Grand Rapids metropolitan area. A central element of the strategy is to offer implementation and ongoing support of EpicCare to affiliated practices. Metro Health’s electronic patient reach also extends well beyond Grand Rapids. It’s a participant in Michigan Health Connect, a state-wide Health Information Exchange.

To ensure that its physicians spend as little time as possible on documentation, Metro Health has deployed Dragon Medical Enterprise for physicians to dictate directly into Epic. Nearly 100 Metro Health physicians across the Emergency Department, neurology and cardiology departments, as well as its hospitalists and intensivists, use Dragon Medical, according to Dr. Bradley Clegg, Chief Medical Informatics Officer. Another 70 are planning on using Dragon Medical in the ambulatory practice.

Dragon Medical Enterprise: A Central Part of Metro Health’s Epic Go-Live

Metro Health’s executive team was inspired to build a new, state-of-the-art acute care facility having seen new facilities built by other leaders including Northwestern University Medical Center. The new Metro Health acute care facility, completed in September 2007, sports 208 large single patient rooms with bedside wireless workstations and monitors in each room.

To support the facility’s delivery of care, Lewkowski and Dr. Clegg realized they needed to select and deploy a system-wide EHR system. Clegg and Lewkowski told physician and IT leadership that together they would be accountable for not only the selected vendor but the success of the deployment.

In 2004, Clegg had formed a Physician IT Team work group consisting of the heads of the physician staff for each medical department. The team began meeting every two weeks and continues to meet today to review the progress of existing plans as well as identify new areas of clinical IT investment. The team chose Epic after a year-long selection process. The first ambulatory practices went live in the fall of 2006; the accelerated project of an additional seven ambulatory practice sites was completed in just a single year.

Physician readiness and the ability to dictate directly in the EHR was a high priority. “We made Epic training an absolute requirement prior to go-live,” remembers Clegg. “Our guideline was very simple: No training, no privileges to the hospital. We gave physicians just 90 days of paid-for dictation and transcription services, and then we took it away. Our physicians knew that on day 91 their choices were keyboard and mouse with templates, or speech recognition.”

The Physician IT Team then turned to the challenge of an end-to-end in-patient Epic deployment and set November 1, 2009 as the hospital go-live date. Clegg’s team adopted a somewhat risky strategy—a “big bang”, hospital-wide go live rather than a phased, department by department plan. They took a careful approach.

“We had some major concerns amongst the physician staff that Epic would substantially slow down our doctors in the hospital,” recalls Clegg. Relying on dictation was determined not to be a viable long-term strategy because of delays in turn-around time and the degree of integration required. They considered other options. “We certainly knew that Dragon Medical existed. At HIMSS 2009, we spent some time researching how other Epic sites had addressed the productivity issue and Dragon Medical appeared to be by far the most successful strategy to maintain physician productivity within Epic.”

The Physician IT Team determined that speech recognition should be offered to physicians. “We wanted the industry leader as our supplier, and Dragon Medical Enterprise was really the only choice. We didn’t look at other products for speech recognition,” says Dr. John Bradley, lead ED physician user and Dragon Medical champion. Metro Health then purchased licenses for 150 physicians as its initial project.

Physician Technology Partners: Delivering Dragon Medical Enterprise and Epic Experience

In Bradley's view, it was Metro Health's recognition of the importance of bringing in outside professional services expertise to augment the project team which ensured that the joint Epic-Dragon Medical Enterprise go-live went smoothly.

The Physician IT Team engaged Physician Technology Partners (PTP), based in Dayton, OH, a Nuance Authorized Sales Agent and consultancy. Led by two physicians, Dr. Brian Zimmerman, and Dr. Riz Pasha—both are ED physician users of Epic and Dragon Medical—PTP is Nuance Healthcare's partner in designing workflows within Epic using speech recognition and in training physicians to effectively document care within Epic using Dragon.

In short order, PTP had early success starting with the ED. "We couldn't have done the Epic-Dragon Medical project so successfully without an experienced consultant," says Dr. Bradley.

"Physician Technology Partners was extraordinarily helpful in working with our physicians," says Bradley. "First, they're physicians. So they have real credibility with our physicians. Dragon Medical Enterprise and Epic are intertwined... Doctors Zimmerman and Pasha had strong knowledge of Epic. They were able to make suggestions on changes to Epic that substantially enhanced our physician productivity. Second, they're also expert Epic and Dragon Medical Enterprise users. PTP was very helpful with the customization of the standard vocabularies, little enhancements such as adding all physician names in the Metro Health system so they were instantly available," said Bradley.

Bradley recalls, "As soon as Epic went live, everyone went on Dragon Medical Enterprise and began doing cases. We had increased our staffing by 1.5 times to cover what we expected would be lower productivity in the first month, but our physicians were so productive, we went back to a normal staffing level half-way through the month."

"Dragon Medical Enterprise has been a lifesaver for everyone in our department. We had been concerned prior to Epic go-live about the impact of Epic on our productivity. Thanks to Dragon Medical Enterprise, productivity did not decrease with Epic and for many of us, productivity substantially increased. We can totally attribute that to Dragon Medical Enterprise. Epic and Dragon Medical Enterprise work well together."

—Dr. Robert Morris
E.D. physician
Metro Health

The Result: Substantial Improvements in Physician Productivity

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"I'm much quicker in my Epic documentation using Dragon Medical Enterprise than with dictation," adds Dr. Morris. "After two weeks I was very comfortable. My colleagues thought I was going to have the hardest transition, but it has been pretty enlightening. I went into learning Dragon Medical Enterprise with a fair amount of fear, but by the end of the second or third shift, I knew my fears were groundless."

Physicians find that using Dragon Medical Enterprise is a natural process. "The flow of the note is much better with Dragon Medical," says Dr. Mike Wiltrakis, an internist. "You can see what other doctors are thinking. Consult notes are a key piece. You have to be more formal. Epic does help out the process because with smart phrases, you can pull forward patient history. But the real value of the consult notes is found in the narrative. That's where Dragon Medical Enterprise makes the difference."

Amee Slesman, the Epic and Dragon Medical Project Manager, has been a key go-to resource at Metro Health, overseeing the project and ensuring physicians have appropriate support to maintain productivity and clinical

effectiveness. “Our hospitalists say that without Dragon Medical Enterprise, they would have had a much harder transition to Epic.” Templates in an EHR are not easy to work with. Doctors are used to telling the patient’s story. The doctors call the output of templates ‘Yoda speak.’ It doesn’t look like a real note. Even with attention to grammar, it can be a challenge to get them to look right,” says Sleesman.

Sleesman also has guidance at the ready about which speech microphone to choose. Her physicians have shown a strong preference for the Nuance PowerMic™ II. “The recognition is superior to the headsets and other microphones we’ve tried.”

The ED As a Primary Target, With Order Entry a New Use for Speech Recognition

Metro Health’s busy ED department sees close to 60,000 visits a year. Clegg recalled that his ED had the three largest months in terms of patient volume leading up to the Epic-Dragon Medical go live.

The ED proved to be a smart choice as an initial focus for deploying speech recognition.

“Dragon Medical Enterprise is extremely well-suited for the ED. Our physicians see patients and then dictate at one of two dictation stations. There isn’t such a thing as a single, common clinical workflow—every patient of course is different. Dragon Medical gives us this flexibility,” says Bradley.

One innovation which Metro Health has realized is the value of dictating clinical information at time of order. “We also use Dragon Medical for CPOE (Computerized Physician Order Entry) because it’s easier to use Dragon Medical to dictate the clinical information. Most orders that are done in the ED—60-70%—require special information or indications. Dragon Medical saves us a ton of time just on completing orders alone,” says Bradley.

“Using Dragon Medical to order saves time. If you have to order a blood culture for example, you have to go through lots of screens within Epic to get to the point where you could dictate a diagnosis,” says Dr. Morris. “We’ve built a macro so all I have to do is say

‘blood cultures times 2’ and Dragon triggers Epic to automatically pull the right information. About 5-10 % of the orders require detailed information. One order can take up to a minute and a half to two minutes. Using Dragon Medical Enterprise’s advanced scripting, that same order takes about ten seconds now,” says Morris.

Dragon Medical and Epic: Two Technologies That Make a Powerful Solution

According to Clegg, Epic frequently sends other customers to visit Metro Health to see how the hospital and practices have successfully deployed and use Epic. In addition to an excellent implementation and support team along with strong physician engagement, Dragon Medical Enterprise has had a significant impact on physician adoption of their EHR.

“When the physicians and IT teams visit from other hospitals, our physicians often comment on the value that Dragon Medical Enterprise has added to our success with Epic. Hospitals from as far away as Florida, California and Arizona have visited us.”

“Many of our physicians feel the success of our Epic inpatient implementation was helped by using Dragon Medical Enterprise.” By using Dragon Medical (smart) tools to navigate through Epic documentation significant time is saved when charting a patient encounter. Those doctors who take the time to build those tools in Dragon Medical have saved themselves potential hours of keyboard work,” says Clegg.

“Despite the need for training on Epic and Dragon Medical Enterprise, physicians have precious little time. Therefore, future training with new physicians is done concurrently with Dragon Medical and Epic. Physicians then realize they must use the different tools together to provide an efficient experience using the dual technologies during patient care workflows.” concluded Clegg.

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