

Alamo Asthma & Allergy

Patient Records and EOBs

Drs. Michael and Adrienne Vaughn began private practice in August 1999 and opened Alamo Asthma & Allergy Associates of San Antonio, TX. This growing practice provides patients with quality treatment for asthma and allergy related illnesses.

The Problem:

The practice began in a relatively small office (1,100 sq. ft.) with four support staff. The doctors invested in a practice management/billing software (Medisoft) for running their office. As the practice grew, they added a nearby office suite (1900 sq.ft.) but even then the doctors realized their space would soon be taken over by the growing number of patient charts they were accumulating. In addition, the logistical problem of running two office suites but having only a single place to store medical records created frequent headaches. As do most medical practices, Alamo Asthma utilized a lot of office staff time preparing and maintaining medical records. "It takes a lot of effort to keep the patient records in order," says Dr. Mike Vaughn. "It's tedious work to file and organize these records and it worsens each year that you are in practice. In addition, patient records are a problem due to the space they occupy, and by law, physicians are required to keep these records on file for seven years (or more)."

Alamo Asthma also offers hospital consulting services in which they see both new patients and also assist in the management of their existing patients. Dr. Vaughn felt that having access to medical records outside his office was an important feature for any EMR (Electronic Medical Record) system. "I've never felt comfortable carrying records around in a hospital or bringing them home, a lost record is a nightmare. Being able to access our records over the Internet would be the best of all worlds and would be especially useful when our patients call us after-hours.

Another major issue that faced Alamo Asthma & Allergy was the amount of paper being generated from the fax machine. Each day the office received numerous requests for medical records, referrals, and prescriptions for their patients as well as lab and X-ray reports. "We need a record management system that can handle every type of paper document that we receive," said Dr. Vaughn

The Solution:

"FileBound was simple to understand and met all my needs," recalls Dr. Michael Vaughn. He also was pleased to know that the developers of FileBound (Marex Corporation) understood that HIPAA requirements are evolving and that they were committed to fulfilling any and all future requirements, as they became known.

Industry:

- » Medical

Application:

- » Patient Records
- » Explanation of Benefits

The Problem:

- » Information from paper records was time consuming to access and hard copies were expensive and difficult to maintain

The Solution:

- » FileBound Content Management Solution

The Benefit:

- » Doctors and administrative personnel have secure and immediate access to patient records

Case Study: Alamo Asthma & Allergy

The FileBound solution was easy to integrate into Alamo Asthma's office practice since they had a computer network in place. The implementation plan called for a two-pronged approach: first, to scan the 3,500 existing patient records into the system; and second, to establish a daily routine for imaging the patient records generated. Because FileBound is a browser based system, Dr. Vaughn was able to hire temporary help to scan his old records from an off-site scanner and upload this data over the Internet to the server in his office. FileBound also met the Doctor's need for portability because the data could be downloaded from the server to a laptop computer or the data could be transferred to a DVD. Since the data files were also accessible over the Internet for home use, without the need for data transfer, there was no need to carry their laptop home each day.

Alamo Asthma used medical record templates that they created for documenting their patient interactions. These templates, which were created in Microsoft® Word, could be printed along with the other documents (such as HIPAA forms and their office policy), prior to the patient's arrival. FileBound's e-forms module was added—a perfect match for Alamo Asthma & Allergy. The e-forms module allowed them to use their existing documents, but with the addition of a bar code for scanning they could identify the patient, the day of the interaction, and also identify the specific form. The most important functionality of e-forms is that the bar code, which can be placed on any office document created, allows the information to be scanned immediately into the FileBound system, placed directly into the appropriate file, and eliminate the need for office staff to perform any manual indexing after scanning. This module also gave them the ability to print each form with the required patient information and the date of service on each page, thereby eliminating the need for the staff to complete this information by hand.

FileBound Results:

FileBound is used daily by the Doctors and staff at Alamo Asthma & Allergy and it has greatly reduced the frustration of having to deal with paper records. "I can do billing from my desk without having to get up to find a chart to get the information I need. I have everything at my fingertips," says Ramie Arenivas (billing specialist). "It's made my job so much easier. I used to copy an EOB (Explanation of Benefits) and use a black marker to remove information on other patients before submitting billing to secondary insurers. Filebound has completely eliminated this problem." The EOBs are the documents sent by health insurers explaining the benefit paid on behalf of their participants and documenting to which patient it pertains. These documents come in various sizes and shapes and one EOB often contains information on many different patients. The creators of FileBound found the best way to manage these documents was with the use of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology. This allows the payment-posting personnel to look up an individual payment in the accounting system and search by a name, medical record or claim number. Once these pages are found, the system allows the use of a "white-out" process to reprint a version of the form that shows only the information on an individual patient as mandated by HIPAA regulations. This can then be used as a backup attachment for secondary claims or in collections

One of Dr. Vaughn's major concerns with using a computer based medical record system was the potential inability to access records during a server crash. This problem was solved by the use of an office lap top to which the server downloads all updated files each PM. If the server ever "goes down", a second source of data is always readily available. Data files are secured in the office by the use of individual passwords and the Filebound software documents who viewed the files and when it occurred. In addition, files are protected against alteration by anyone other than the primary administrator.

Dr. Vaughn gives high marks to FileBound. "FileBound has helped me expand my practice without having to add additional office support staff. I wholeheartedly recommend this system to any medical practice that feels their paper records are running their lives."

Bottom Line:

Encounters Reports go digital - Respond to Dr. calls on the spot - Patient Records available 24/7 - reduced the on-going cost of Patient records