

# CASE STUDY

## THE FAMILY HEALTHCARE CENTER, CLINTON, SC



### HEALTHMATICS® EMR ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD

#### PRACTICE PROFILE

<b>Type of Practice/Specialty</b>	Adult, Geriatric & Pediatric Medicine, Minor Surgery, Preventive Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology
<b>Date Practice Founded</b>	1992
<b>Go-Live Date</b>	September 2001
<b>Number of Locations</b>	2 offices + 3 skilled facilities featuring wireless EMR
<b>Number of Physicians</b>	7 + 2 NPs
<b>Number of Employees</b>	24
<b>PM Vendor/Interface</b>	Misys PM
<b>Lab Vendor/Interface</b>	Quest
<b>Hardware</b>	Dell® 2500 servers & PCs and Fujitsu P-series handhelds
<b>Web Site</b>	<a href="http://www.tfhc.com">www.tfhc.com</a>



*"The clinical and operational benefits of A<sup>4</sup>'s EMR are tremendous. We have been able to reduce costs and increase efficiencies as well as boost productivity."*

*Ira Bedenbaugh, practice administrator*



*"I am so used to having information at my fingertips, from phone messages to lab results to drug interaction information. A<sup>4</sup> has created a very intuitive and user friendly system."*

*Holbrook Raynal, MD*

#### SEEKING THE BEST SOLUTION

Located in upstate South Carolina, The Family Healthcare Center (FHC) considered an EMR for many years to help improve office efficiencies and reduce overhead, but fully committed to the idea in 2000 when the practice had 100 percent physician buy-in. Back-office operational issues, high transcription costs and wasted time and energy prompted the practice to go electronic, sending the group looking for an EMR solution.

The field was narrowed to six different EMR solutions, and FHC conducted site visits to witness all vendors' systems in a real-practice setting. After identifying ease of use, cost, vendor's corporate health, interoperability and streamlined implementations as their main criteria for an EMR, FHC chose A<sup>4</sup> HEALTH SYSTEMS® HEALTHMATICS EMR.

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### LOOKING AHEAD

Opportunities abound for The Family Healthcare Center and their EMR technology is enabling their endeavors. The practice is now able to provide healthcare for a local college, treating nearly 1,300 students at the school's on-site facility. Furthermore, the practice has created an office in a private K-12 school/home for children – another welcome addition to their wireless EMR network.

And, since claims are being processed more efficiently with HEALTHMATICS EMR, the practice has no qualms about handling the billing for their new influx of patients.

Looking forward, FHC will extend its network of care and search for additional opportunities afforded through technology. Already interfacing with Quest for lab results, the practice will include an interface with LabCorp® and hopes to integrate its EMR technology with the local hospital for test results.

Through cost savings, efficiencies and improved quality of practice life, HEALTHMATICS EMR has helped FHC manage its existing business while progressing into new opportunities.

### COUNTING THE BENEFITS

- **Reduced transcription** - FHC dropped transcription costs from \$65,000 in 2001 to \$15,500 in 2003.
- **Realigned staffing ratios** - FHC's administrator has been able to enlarge the nursing department while decreasing reception and medical records staff. Initially, FHC utilized five receptionists in each office because of chart filing and handling. HEALTHMATICS EMR helped FHC reduce receptionists to three in each office and then add a fourth as part time.
- **Improved coding** - FHC is happy to see their documentation support more accurate coding. The relative value units per encounter increased an average of 15%.
- **Enhanced mobility and accessibility** - With several office locations, FHC can send patients to whichever location they need to go without worrying about moving a chart. Additionally, physicians use wireless Fujitsu handhelds while seeing patients, which allows them to access real-time information and move freely about the office.

Physicians highly value their at-home and hospital connectivity to access and update charts. One physician even uses his handheld device at home on a wireless network. Since his handheld has a secure Virtual Private Network (VPN) setup, he recently worked on patient charts at a cyber café.

- **Eliminated paper inefficiencies** - Without paper, the practice no longer searches for lost charts, generates mountains of paper daily, misfiles items within the chart or receives "can't read" inquiries from the pharmacy on prescription orders. FHC has been able to cut the cost of supplies, including chart supplies and paper, by more than \$10,000 in one year with HEALTHMATICS EMR.
- **Expanded office hours** - The EMR has allowed FHC to expand their office hours with an additional 10 hours. But, the ability to expand office hours doesn't necessarily mean more work, because with reduced dictation physicians are heading home earlier. "They're just happy to be done at the end of the day," the administrator indicated of his physicians.
- **Enriched quality of life** - Reduced inefficiencies and streamlined processes have created a calm and organized operation at FHC's offices. Physicians love having real-time information at their fingertips, and the practice highly favors the quiet and orderly environment over the pre-EMR office.
- **Impressed patients** - Not only do FHC's patients now have the option of office locations and expanded office hours, they are impressed by the physicians' handheld devices as well as the printouts received of their specific results and aftercare instructions. "I love to see the look on a patients face when they get their weight or hemoglobin numbers printed out in a graph," stated Nick Ulmer, M.D. "It's notable for patients to leave a physicians' office with something other than their bill."