Christopher A. Cefalu, MD, Transforms Workflows and Restores Work-Life Balance with NextGen Clinical AI

THE CHALLENGE

Christopher A. Cefalu, MD is a board-certified urologist with Urology Clinics of North Texas. For a long time, burnout has been a major issue for Dr. Cefalu and his colleagues. Physicians felt that they spend a small amount of time seeing patients compared to the time spent documenting and billing.

Dr. Cefalu used to go back and forth between typing and dictating.

"I hated dictating because at the end of the day after seeing so many patients my voice gets tired and having to say it over again wore on me to be honest, so most of the time I would just sit down and type."

Many physicians have transitioned to using scribes, but not everyone can afford a scribe, and staffing is a real challenge. Luckily, Dr. Cefalu quickly found that artificial intelligence (AI) could do that for him. Dr. Cefalu had been interested in AI's role in improving documentation and workflow for several years.

When Dr. Cefalu heard that NextGen Healthcare was releasing NextGen Clinical AI with an ambient AI Scribe, he jumped on as a volunteer to test it.

"Almost immediately after the first few test runs, I realized that it would be a huge asset to my day-to-day practice," said Dr. Cefalu. "I've been using it pretty much nonstop now for two months with almost every patient I see."

THE SOLUTION

The ambient AI Scribe is an AI-powered mobile documentation solution that can generate a structured SOAP note in seconds by listening to the natural, patient-provider conversation. This note can be reviewed and edited by the provider, and then instantly sent to the patient's chart in the EHR.

It has proven to be a substantial time-saver for Dr. Cefalu's practice.

"It has taken the burden of sitting at a computer for five, ten minutes after each patient and documenting that encounter to spending maybe 15 to 20 seconds to put in a diagnosis and a charge," said Dr. Cefalu.

Dr. Cefalu describes his new workflow after he uses the app to listen to a typical visit:

"I'll walk out of the room, I'll let Ambient Assist [Clinical AI] start to generate the note, and by the time I walk up to my receptionist and give them the follow-up plans for the patient the note is ready." Then, Dr. Cefalu said, "I hit 'Send to EHR,' and by the time I get back to my computer, it's there. I put in my diagnosis, my charges, and move on to the next patient within 30 seconds."

CLIENT PROFILE

Urology Clinics of North Texas

Background: Urology Clinics of North Texas is the premier name in urologic treatment in the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area. Initially formed in 1999, Urology Clinics of North Texas delivers state-of-the-art care to patients at 21 locations throughout the North Texas area.

NextGen Healthcare Solutions:

NextGen® Clinical AI

NextGen® Enterprise EHR

NextGen® Mobile

HIGHLIGHTS



No longer typing notes by hand



Uses Clinical AI for almost every patient



From minutes of documentation per encounter to seconds

nextgen HEALTHCARE



This is a remarkable difference from his days of rushing to hand-type each note. It is more efficient, quicker, and intuitive for his day-to-day schedule. Previously, with his packed days, he often had to wait to complete his notes. Naturally, details can get left out and memory strain takes a toll.

"I think Ambient Assist [Clinical AI] is going to improve accuracy of documentation because we're not going to have the delay in completing our documentation," said Dr. Cefalu.

THE IMPACT

Dr. Cefalu notes that he could add on more patients each day thanks to Clinical AI, but chooses not to because he likes the workflow, wants to focus on patient care, and appreciates the better work-life balance.

"Indirectly, it's improving care because it gives me more time with the patient," said Dr. Cefalu. "Sometimes we feel rushed with patients because we've got so much to do and only so much time, but over the past few months, I've been less rushed," said Dr. Cefalu.

This additional time each day has allowed some patients to talk about an additional problem that they weren't necessarily there for. Fostering patient loyalty and comfort is paramount to all practices, as is determining the whole picture of health.

Security is also important to Dr. Cefalu and Urology Clinics of North Texas.

"The big one is that Ambient Assist [Clinical AI] does not save any of the data. It's completely HIPAA-compliant," says Dr. Cefalu. He compares Clinical AI directly to having a scribe in the room and trusts it just as much.

Clinical AI and AI Scribe have already transformed Dr. Cefalu's workflow for the better, in a matter of weeks. He looks forward to using them more, and he encourages his peers to give the technology a shot.

"I wouldn't see limitations for any specialty," said Dr. Cefalu. "Everybody that's going in, seeing a patient, and doing documentation afterward: this will help you."

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