

# Case Study

## Choosing the Best Solution: A Specialty Practice Benefits from Going Digital with SequelMed EHR

Endocrine Associates of Nassau & Queens, P.C. (EANQ) is a thriving practice on Long Island, serving patients in and around Nassau county and Queens, New York with endocrine and metabolism disorders and diabetes. Over the past 18 years, the practice has grown to a dozen physicians, educators and staff serving several thousand patients. Spurred by patient demand, increased use of information technology and potential benefits of the new stimulus package, in 2008 EANQ decided to embark on the road to a comprehensive electronic health records (EHR) system.

### The Issue

According to the Congressional Budget Office, in a few years 90 percent of physicians will be using a comprehensive EHR and delivering associated benefits for patients and the healthcare system. However, one of the main obstacles that continues to hinder widespread adoption is cost. The economic stimulus package and recent legislation, however, has dramatically altered this reality for many physician practices. The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act was enacted not only to stimulate the economy, but also to provide physician practices with support for overcoming this obstacle and implementing an EHR system. The health IT component of the legislation—the HITECH Act—appropriates \$17 billion in incentive programs to encourage healthcare organizations to adopt EHRs and rewards those who can demonstrate meaningful use of a certified system.

With potentially significant financial benefits in place for practices that implement early on and demonstrate meaningful use of a certified EHR before legislative deadline of 2011, EANQ felt the time was right to begin a phased roll out of its new EHR system in late 2008.

Two elements were critical in selecting the right solution for EANQ. First, the EHR system needed to be customized to meet the unique needs of a busy endocrinology practice and its patients. And second, with thousands of patients and a large staff, EANQ needed to ensure that the transition to a paperless environment would not disrupt normal workflow or shut down its office for any length of time. In fact, when the practice began moving thousands of paper patient records and multiple clinical and billing systems to a fully integrated EHR, it quickly realized that a wholesale transition, while continuing to see and treat patients, would be impossible without the right plan in place.



### Customer Profile:

- Endocrine Associates of Nassau & Queens, PC
- Great Neck, NY
- Private practice specializing in diabetes, endocrinology and metabolism disorders
- 5 physicians and over a dozen educators and staff
- Serving thousands of patients for more than 18 years

### ROI:

- All new patients are paperless
- Existing paper records are being scanned into the EHR system
- Improved ability to capture and manage patient information
- Patient notes entered directly into the system
- E-prescribing is primary method for prescriptions
- Automation and streamlining of workflow
- Could receive up to \$64,000 in incentive payments

## The Solution

Dr. Susan Wassermann, managing partner of EANQ, realized that a decision about the right EHR system would have significant impact on all the physicians and staff and involved her entire team in the review process. Under her leadership, the practice conducted a thorough search of EHR vendors and decided on Sequel Systems' CCHIT-certified suite of solutions, SequelMed® EHR™, an all-in-one, fully integrated solution that combines the power of practice management, document management and medical records.

Two key components of Sequel Systems' solution set it apart from other healthcare IT vendors:

First, the company offered EANQ a systematic and phased roll out. Sequel Systems' unique implementation strategy is characterized not by a wholesale, overnight move to a new system, but instead by a tiered or phased approach whereby users are steadily acclimated to and trained in the new processes while the technology itself is customized to meet the unique needs and workflow of the practice. This approach increased practice-wide buy in for adoption and day-to-day use supported by comprehensive physician and staff training and ensured a seamless transition from paper-based to paperless environment.

Second, Sequel Systems' dedication to customizing templates made it a perfect fit for the specialized needs of EANQ. Working closely with physicians and staff, Sequel Systems helped the practice create customized templates for endocrinology. Then, rather than requiring EANQ to change its workflow to meet the technology, as is customary with many out-of-the-box solutions, Sequel Systems tailored its EHR system to meet EANQ's unique workflow and the specific needs of the practice and its patients.

## The Impact

Today, 14 months into its roll out, EANQ has made tremendous progress and achieved several key milestones, including:

- All new patient records are begun electronically;
- Existing paper records are being scanned into the system;
- The practice is fully integrated with most laboratory systems;
- Physicians are almost exclusively using e-prescribing for patient medications;

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*Dr. Susan Wasserman*

- All patient notes and dictations are entered directly into the system;
- Several physicians are expected to be fully paperless within six months.

In addition, with a fully-connected EHR now well underway before the legislative deadline and more than 30 percent of its patients receiving Medicaid, Endocrine Associates stands poised to benefit from five years of financial incentives from the economic stimulus. In fact, over the next five years, EANQ could:

- Receive up to \$64,000 in incentive payments from going live and demonstrating "meaningful use" of an EHR before the legislative deadline of 2011;
- See a 1-3 percent increase in reimbursement as a result of e-prescribing and an additional 2 percent as a result of automatically tracking and reporting measures in compliance with the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI);
- Enjoy significant additional savings from reduction of staff, paper storage and transcription costs.

### About Sequel Systems, Inc.

Sequel Systems, Inc. is a dynamic service-oriented company that develops software to simplify the complex practice and medical records management needs of healthcare providers while maximizing revenue and streamlining operations. Sequel Systems' CCHIT-certified suite of flexible, easy-to-use and comprehensive SequelMed® solutions includes practice management, electronic health records, electronic medical records, document management, e-prescribing and financial systems and scales to fit the needs of the small, medium and large enterprises. Today, Sequel Systems' solutions are in use by more than 12,000 physicians in all 50 states to provide the best possible care to patients through the use of technology.

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