Prairie Clinic’s Medical Technology Committee was attracted to NextGen® Patient Portal after learning about the solution at the 2008 NextGen Healthcare Users Group Meeting. Patients can send messages to their provider and request medication refills whenever it fits their schedule. After evaluating the product, they built confidence and support for NextGen Patient Portal from the inside out.

“We began using the program and trained a small group of super-users working with a couple of our providers’ within the practice on how to communicate with patients and execute tasks using NextGen Patient Portal,” said Todd Zantow, network administrator. “We brought staff onto the patient portal in waves, adding more and more provider-nurse teams until all of our providers were on the NextGen Patient Portal by February 2011.”

“A key element to our patient portal installation was driving patient enrollment,” Zantow continued. “Since our entire practice supported the goals of our patient portal initiative, patients heard about the portal from the time they checked in and several times throughout their office visit. It was critical that we all spoke to the benefits of our patient portal to drive interest and, ultimately, enrollment.”

35% of all Prairie Clinic patients have enrolled in patient portal

No Chortle on the Portal

Zantow said patients may naturally overexpress themselves on the phone compared with how they communicate on a patient portal.

Prairie Clinic uses a patient’s onsite visits to build patient relationships – including a healthy amount of “small talk.” But patients get down to business faster on the patient portal. “Using NextGen Patient Portal sharpens and shortens communication by both the patient and the provider saving both parties time,” Zantow said. He thinks patients tend to make more direct requests when they type instead of talk.
The Dollars and Sense of Patient Portal

Prairie Clinic estimates an up-front hard savings of $1.50 per patient encounter by using NextGen Patient Portal to send after-visit summaries. “We save on costs by eliminating associated labor, stamps, envelopes, and printing,” Zantow added. “Now our staff is able to take the time saved for these labor costs and do more valuable tasks.” Zantow notes the practice now saves more than $200K annually in these discreet costs.

Additionally, all providers in the practice have achieved Meaningful Use (MU) Stage 1 and have received Stage 1 incentive payments. They’re fully equipped and ready to pursue MU Stage 2 including secure, bidirectional electronic communication with patients using a patient portal.

Portal Rewards Include Schedule Flex, Documentation, Integration

Prairie Clinic reports they’re in more control of workflows since using NextGen Patient Portal regularly. They can choose when to respond to patient portal messages depending upon urgency and their own priorities during any given moment of the workday.

Zantow believes that patients understand responses to patient portal messages could range from instant to 24 to 48 hours. “They’re OK with that,” he said. “It’s part of ‘what’s expected’ in email.”

NextGen Patient Portal enhances patient health information (PHI) documentation and can capture ongoing patient dialog – symptoms, treatment plan adjustments, referrals, medication changes, etc. – and populate key documentation fields within the EHR and practice management systems. This saves time, enhances data accuracy, and improves patient safety.

“NextGen Patient Portal enhances the workflows of everyone in the practice who engages with patients.”

Todd Zantow, Network Administrator
Prairie Clinic, Sauk City, WI

Take the Next Step:
Contact us to find out how we can help you. 855-510-6398