



Dragon® NaturallySpeaking® Medical

Lifetime Health Medical Group Complements NextGen® EMR Initiative with Dragon NaturallySpeaking Medical

Lifetime Health Medical Group, Buffalo and Rochester, New York, a non-profit healthcare delivery system with a focus on primary care, has integrated Dragon NaturallySpeaking Medical 9, from Nuance, into the daily practice of many providers. The widespread use of Dragon has complemented the initial rollout of Lifetime Health Medical Group's NextGen EMR. Although the EMR implementation is in the early stages, the use of Dragon within NextGen has already proven to be fruitful in terms of document completeness, turnaround time, confidence of coding accuracy and transcription cost savings.

Pre-Dragon

Prior to implementing NextGen and Dragon, providers at Lifetime engaged in a variety of documentation methods, ranging from hand writing notes to dictating into cassette tapes which were then sent to transcription. Annual transcription costs at the Buffalo health centers ranged from \$750,000 to \$800,000. Document turnaround time could take up to 3 weeks, which inhibited providers from administering patient care with all necessary information in-hand.

Motivated by some financial challenges the group was facing, and realizing that speech recognition could not only alleviate the burdens of high transcription cost, but could also drastically improve document turnaround time as well as the patient care experience, Dr. Douglas Golding, Medical Director & Chief of Healthcare Informatics, decided to purchase a copy of Dragon to "play around with." Dr. Golding was excited about the "once-and-done" front-end speech recognition method that had the potential of completely eliminating transcription expenses throughout the group. Dr. Golding was impressed with the rich functionality and recognition accuracy of Dragon, and quickly decided that the entire group of providers in Buffalo could significantly benefit from it.

Highlights

- 69 providers dictating with Dragon NaturallySpeaking.
- Many providers seeing recognition accuracy rates of 98%+.
- Projected annual transcription cost savings is \$680,000.
- Return on investment of Dragon took 1.5 months.
- Turnaround time reduced from up to 3 weeks, in some cases, to instantaneous.
- Dragon affords the user flexibility to dictate narrative, and point-and-click within the EMR.
- Dragon and NextGen will be aggressively rolled out to all 110 providers.



Dr. Douglas Golding, Medical Director & Chief of Healthcare Informatics, Lifetime Medical Health Group

Smooth Roll-Out

Dragon was rapidly implemented across a provider population of 69 individuals. Many providers took to the technology very quickly, and paved the way for those who were less eager to adopt the “once-and-done” mode. As added motivation, the group instituted a modest penalty for those providers who still chose to use traditional transcription after a certain deadline. In a short period of time, all providers were using Dragon to dictate a large portion of their daily patient documentation.

Marc Reinhardt, System Architect, indicated that ramping up the users, and supporting them is quite easy. He also indicated that functionality of the system is impressive. “You’re always sure that the spelling of some inately spelled medication will be correct.” Reinhardt also commented on the expertise of some of the users, “It blows my mind to sit there and watch the physicians; it’s like some of them were born using Dragon,” he said.

Satisfied Providers

Providers are extremely satisfied with the benefits they’ve attained via Dragon. “I use Dragon every single day in a lot of different ways,” said Dr. Donald Brown, Manager of Physical Therapy. He continued, “I couldn’t imagine going back to dictating and waiting...Dragon is such an efficient system. It’s good for quality and good for communication between colleagues.” Many providers are seeing recognition accuracy rates of 98%, which facilitates rapid note completion. Dr. Golding added another tangential benefit of Dragon, “For me, Dragon is fun!”

Enhanced Patient Care

Additionally, Dr. Brown indicated that finishing notes more quickly enables more one-on-one time with patients which enhances customer satisfaction and outcomes. “We can get patients better, faster, spending more one-on-one time with them,” he said. Many providers have the convenience of dictating wherever they choose with tablet PCs and USB-based or wireless microphones. “We’re able to take Dragon along with us while we’re treating patients,” mentioned Dr. Brown.

Significant Cost Savings

The savings associated with eliminating transcription across the Buffalo health centers were significant. During the first year of Dragon use, \$415,000 was saved, and Dr. Golding projects this figure to increase to \$680,000 within the next year. The impressive rapid transcription savings translated into a return on investment of 1.5 months. “Most technology investments take two to three years to break even,” said Golding, clearly impressed by this rapid return.

More Accurate Coding

Dragon has also facilitated more accurate coding within the group. “With Dragon, the note stares me in the face so I’m able to recognize that I’ve documented appropriately, and, if appropriate, I can bump the code level up to where it belongs,” said Dr. Golding. Dr. Arthur Orlick, Chief Operating Officer & Chief Medical Officer, concurs, “However you document a visit, the documentation of that visit is the key, and supporting the code that you submit with that is essential.”

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“Our vision is to be paperless. Without a tool like Dragon that vision could never be achieved. Dragon is a pinnacle piece to making our electronic medical record a success.”

EMR Initiative – Dragon’s Contribution

Even in the early stages of EMR implementation, the value Dragon adds to the NextGen EMR is extremely salient. “At my former practice, I felt the pain of dealing with this total point and click world. The dream of speaking into the note instead of typing to supplement my point and clicks is now becoming a reality,” said Dr. Golding. Dr. Golding further emphasized the importance of narrative dictation within a note, “It’s very important to show why a provider has chosen a certain diagnosis; we need to document the thought process.”

Dr. Brown reemphasized the excitement of providers regarding the benefits of NextGen coupled with Dragon. Notes being available instantly through the EMR “will inevitably enhance quality, improve efficiencies, and improve outcomes,” he said.

Looking Ahead

Currently, Lifetime Health Medical Group is rapidly rolling out their NextGen EMR to all 110 providers at 11 health centers in the group. “Our vision is to be paperless. Without



**Bob Krenitsky, Chief Information Officer,
Lifetime Medical Health Group**

Challenge: Reduce rising transcription costs and convert a paper-based system into a completely electronic environment.

Solution: Roll-out Dragon NaturallySpeaking Medical to majority of providers followed by aggressive implementation of NextGen EMR.

Results: 69 providers are currently dictating the majority of the patient documentation with Dragon NaturallySpeaking. Many providers are realizing recognition accuracy rates of 98%, resulting in instant turnaround time. ROI was attained in 1.5 months and projected annual transcription cost savings is \$680,000. Dragon affords the user flexibility to dictate narrative, and point-and-click within the EMR. Dragon and NextGen will be aggressively rolled out to all 110 providers in the near future.

a tool like Dragon that vision could never be achieved. Dragon is a pinnacle piece to making our electronic medical record a success,” said Chief Information Officer, Bob Krenitsky. Additionally, Krenitsky mentioned that the anticipated return on investment of the NextGen system mainly encompasses transcription savings and medical record savings. Without Dragon, the transcription savings would not be close to what is projected for next year.

Krenitsky and Dr. Golding envision that virtually all providers at the Buffalo health centers will be using NextGen and Dragon in tandem. Providers at the Rochester health centers, many of whom are not currently using Dragon, will benefit from the roll-out of both applications. Krenitsky and Dr. Golding expect to see additional transcription cost savings in these centers as well, as they fully adopt Dragon and displace traditional transcription. Going beyond using Dragon with the EMR, Krenitsky mentioned that he’s currently exploring other areas that Dragon could be used for. He indicated that someday he may even try to get the patients using Dragon to fill in medical history forms while waiting to see providers, creating a completely electronic environment.

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