

Surgeon Uses BlackBerry to Improve Patient Care

Business challenge

As a bariatric surgeon – someone who specializes in weight loss surgery – this doctor faces a challenge that many of his colleagues understand: keeping in touch with patients. With more than 50 patient emails per day, Dr. Simpson is in high-demand. He is also on the board of directors for an Alaskan native-owned organization that needs to keep in constant contact with him.

Solution

Having patient emails pushed to his BlackBerry® handheld allows this busy medical professional to send quick responses to a patient who has a question – either pre-operatively or concerning their after care. Dr. Simpson finds that most patient inquiries are fairly straightforward and can be handled with a simple response. BlackBerry opens up more opportunities to communicate with his patients because it is often the simple questions that patients wouldn't pose via telephone, but will via email.

This adds an extra level of patient education. Now that he has a built-in electronic trail of all his patient communications, he can refer back to instructions to ensure that patients are complying with post-operative care. This email record, which is also kept in the patient file at the office, is also attractive to his malpractice insurer. In the event that it is ever needed, all patient care records are kept, right down to the minutest detail, removing any disputes over what transpired.

"Even when I am out of town at meetings, BlackBerry allows me to keep in constant touch with patients. Often times their questions are simple ones that can be asked in an email. BlackBerry provides a tool to quickly answer their questions no matter where I am."

- Dr. Terry Simpson

Dr. Simpson also takes advantage of the other BlackBerry features that make it a proven all-in-one solution. His patient calendar – the record of booked appointments – is kept in Microsoft Outlook®. If the doctor decides during contact with a patient that he'd like to meet with them, he can schedule an appointment on the spot. All Dr. Simpson has to do is look up his patient calendar for an opening, book it in, send an email to the patient with a copy to his office and the appointment is automatically booked.

"What I used to do was ask the patient to call the office and make an appointment. Now, my BlackBerry handheld allows me to do this instantly. It saves a lot of steps for the patients, my office and me, and makes the process much more efficient, with less frustration."

- Dr. Terry Simpson

Industry
Healthcare

Company
Affiliated Surgical
Associates, P.C.

Employees
Seven

Location
Arizona, USA

Environment:
Yahoo®/Hotmail®

"I was truly amazed at how easily and accurately BlackBerry works. Everything I need is just right there in one handheld!"

*Dr. Terry Simpson
Affiliated Surgical Associates*

In addition, Dr. Simpson's after-hours office voice mail is equipped with a feature that automatically sends an email to the doctor indicating that a call has been received. If he needs to follow up with a patient after hearing the message, the record of patient phone numbers he keeps on his BlackBerry handheld provides easy, mobile access.

In his secondary role as a board member, Dr. Simpson is frequently sent complicated documents. Before the BlackBerry solution, he found himself continually on the hunt for a dial-up connection for his laptop. The day he discovered that he could read attachments, such as Microsoft® Word files and PDFs on his BlackBerry handheld was the day he stopped carrying his laptop on his travels. He now also uses the attachment-handling feature to send documents to his business associates and patients.

Benefits

Patients are happier because they have improved access to their doctor. This busy mobile professional can respond to patients' questions quickly, without having to find an Internet connection or carry a laptop. When a patient needs more care than can be handled in a short message, the doctor can immediately instruct them to visit an emergency room or see the doctor on call, increasing his comfort level with their care. His office workflow processes have been simplified since the doctor can book appointments himself, removing the need for an entire office position.

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