

It's About Success

Physicians connect via the Santa Cruz Health Information Exchange using PMG Technology Solutions



OVERVIEW

Founded in 1987, Dr. Robert Weber's Family Practice in Watsonville, California, serves several thousand patients. As an early Electronic Medical Records (EMR) adopter and participant in the Santa Cruz Health Information Exchange (SCHIE), the family practice of three physicians has been receiving and exchanging clinical information with the greater health care community for more than a decade.

With over 300 providers, 42 specialties, and 100 locations, Physicians Medical Group of Santa Cruz County (PMG) is the organization that provides connectivity to the SCHIE. As one of the nation's longest running HIE, the SCHIE enables electronic clinical data communication between PMG providers, Dominican Hospital, Watsonville Community Hospital, County Health Clinics, national and local reference labs, imaging centers, and safety net clinics.

THE CHALLENGES

In 2001, Dr. Weber's PMG-affiliated practice implemented Practice Partner, an EMR. Although the EMR provided the paper-free patient record system that they were trying to achieve, they could exchange data with only one of the six labs serving the community. A full-time employee was hired to cut and paste or scan data into the EMR, as well as manage data for outgoing referral and authorization processes. When PMG offered Dr. Weber Elysium I-Hub as part of the PMG Technology Solutions (PMGTS) package, it was clear that it would allow his practice to automate their health information exchange with the entire health care community.

Elysium I - Hub Benefits Overview

\$30k cost saving annually

Instant access to information

Improved workflow

“PMG Technology Solutions has given us immediate access to the hospitals and other anticipating physicians' medical information; allowing us to improve the quality of health care and efficiency in our practice.”

*Robert J. Weber, MD
Family Practice,
Watsonville, CA*

Practice Impact:

- Implemented the Elysium Interoperability Hub (I-Hub), provided by PMGTS to enable interoperability and fully collaborative patient care.
- Eliminated data redundancies, improved reporting accuracy and efficiency.
- Seamless receipt and delivery of clinical data electronically to and from any EMR on the SCHIE.
- Capability to order services such as laboratory tests through bidirectional interfaces.
- Easily connects disparate systems, providing data in a format that meets the physicians needs—cost-effectively and with minimal administrative attention.
- Patient information is available when and where it is needed, to improve the timeliness and safety of patient care.

THE SOLUTION

Through the installation of the Elysium i-Hub as part of the SCHIE, Dr. Weber was able to automate their health information exchange with the entire healthcare community. Within a short time frame, Dr. Weber's office went live, eliminated the data entry position and began using their EMR application to seamlessly receive and send clinical information. Dr. Weber estimates that using PMGTS and the Elysium I-Hub saves his practice \$30,000 annually. His practice now averages over 4,200 clinical messages each month. Referrals are simple, prescription refills are automatic, and each patient's incoming data arrives where it needs to be—in the patient record.

“Now that we implemented the Elysium I-Hub, it takes our MA a few minutes a day to manage exceptions from the I-Hub and place into the charts. Overall, the data is more accurate because it doesn't involve human intervention and it's more detailed. Because of the I-Hub, our staff can use their time to focus on activities that improve patient satisfaction,” says Dr. Weber, “Sometimes when I call a patient about their lab results, they are shocked because the turnaround time was so fast—I-Hub delivers the results, immediately upon completion.”

With PMGTS, Dr. Robert Weber's Family Practice is connected, communicating and collaborating on patient care instantly. The exchange of information through the I-Hub securely receives, translates, appends, and exchanges all clinical data, including results, orders and authorizations—using a vast number of clinical information standards supported by PMGTS.

Dr. Weber has achieved cost and time savings by utilizing the SCHIE to receive and send clinical data from his EMR. He has increased the efficiency in his practice by spending less time inputting and scanning data from clinical results, referrals, and so forth—allowing the physicians and staff in his practice to spend more time with patients and improve the quality of care they provide. The practice has also benefited from the interoperability and electronic communication with specialists and physicians connected to the SCHIE, enabling the practice to have a more complete picture of health and speed the process of care for their patients.

“Using PMG Technology Solutions, all physician practices and hospitals connected to the SCHIE are able to collaborate on patient care.”

*Bill Beighe
Chief Information Officer
Physicians Medical Group of
Santa Cruz County*