

Case Study



Colorado medical practice seeks Rx for paper overload



Miramont Family Medicine

Miramont Family Medicine is not only a valued health services provider for northern Colorado residents, it's also a business success story—one in which information technology has played a key role. After purchasing a single Fort Collins-based medical practice in 2002, Dr. John Bender and his wife, Teresa, managed to steadily grow Miramont into a sizeable organization. Today, Miramont serves more than 33,000 patients in seven locations.

Business Needs

Robust growth, of course, also meant an exponential growth of paperwork, from patient charts and insurance ID cards to insurance forms and lab reports.

“By 2007 we had a dilemma,” says Dr. Bender, the practice’s chief executive officer as well as the incoming president of the Colorado Medical Society. “We had walls of paper charts, and it was taking up expensive real estate. We realized we could gain more exam rooms if we got rid of paper records.”

At the time, the push towards electronic medical records was evolving rapidly, but many systems and solutions were still expensive and complex. “There were horrendous prices. One company offered to scan our records for \$50,000,” says Dr. Bender. “We recognized that we would need to make a strategic investment in information technology to successfully grow the business and serve our patients more effectively.”

Solution: Fujitsu scanners and EMR/EHR software solution to digitize medical records and documents

Albrecht knew about the reputation of Fujitsu scanners. In After a review of different systems and solutions, Miramont selected several core components to serve as the foundation for its new electronic records systems. These included software from e-MDs—a provider of integrated electronic health records (EHR) and electronic medical records (EMR) solutions—a high-performance file server, and ID card scanners.

The practice also selected high-speed Fujitsu scanners, including the fi-5100 series, fi-5600 series, and fi-6670s. “We looked at a variety of scanners,” says Dr. Bender. “But I had experience with Fujitsu scanners, and knew they provided the kind of robust, commercial-grade performance that we needed to scan and archive existing files and use on all patient files in the future.”

Miramont established an efficient workflow and aggressive timeline to reach the goal of digitizing most of the practice’s paper documents. Dr. Bender hired some college students to assist in scanning existing paper documents. “We were going non-stop for nearly eight months,” he says, “resulting in the scanning of about 8,000 patient records.”

The practice also placed a scanner in the reception area of its different locations, so each time a patient checked out, any records or documents are immediately scanned into the e-MDs system. In between patients, receptionists would continually work on scanning existing boxes of documents. “At one point we had scanned about 50,000 pounds of paper records, which were sent to a professional shredding company for disposal,” Dr. Bender says.

Records scanned by the Fujitsu scanners are stored in the e-MDs system as either Adobe PDF files or JPEG images. The scanners process a wide range of paper documents, including letters, ID cards, handwritten notes—even sticky notes stuck to charts.

The electronic records, which are protected by a series of security measures, are backed up regularly and then transmitted over a high-speed connection for storage and archiving at a data warehouse in another state.

Benefits: Practice achieves vastly improved labor efficiencies, more time and enhanced service in patient visits

The decision to implement its own electronic records systems resulted in Miramont gaining national attention for its efforts, including the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Davies Award of Excellence for its IT solution. The initiative has also resulted in distinct benefits for Miramont and its patients.



Jolletta Boyer, a Miramont Family Clinic staff member prepares patient records for scanning on a Fujitsu fi-5750C.

“First, there are incredible labor efficiencies in using the Fujitsu scanners on every piece of paper that comes through the practice,” Dr. Bender says. “If practices just get an electronic health records system in place, but don’t scan all paper that comes through, they’re still stuck having to pull paper to look through notes.”

He says that the solution also delivers faster customer services—which means more time that is available to spend with patients.

“All I have to do is open a patient’s file—even one that is hundreds of pages—and I can quickly locate, for example, an EKG chart,” Dr. Bender says. “In the past, I probably spent half my time trying to find information. Now I just hit the F4 button to rapidly scroll through files. It allows me to provide information and treatment faster to patients, and frees up more time to spend with them. In fact, we estimate that on average, the electronic solution makes an additional 10 minutes available for patients for each appointment.”

Dr. Bender even notes, only half jokingly, that the electronic system improves his own health. “With electronic documents,” he says, “I don’t get paper cuts or pick up germs from contaminated documents.”

Miramont staff members are also impressed by the sturdy performance of the Fujitsu scanners. They churn through tens of thousands of documents effortlessly, requiring only a change of rollers about every 100,000 pages.

“With the reliable Fujitsu scanners putting documents into our e-MDs system, our providers and staff can access patient information from anywhere as long as they have Internet connectivity,” says Dr. Bender. “The solution has brought enormous efficiencies, it makes our providers’ work lives easier, and it allows us to deliver more and better service to our patients.”

Miramont Family Medicine benefit snapshot:

- **Digitized documents can be located in seconds instead of minutes or longer**
- **Solution frees up about 10 additional minutes for each patient appointment**
- **Physicians and other staff members can locate information from any Internet access point, instead of having to wait for paper to be pulled from files**
- **Rugged Fujitsu scanners perform flawlessly through hundreds of thousands of documents**
- **Practice has been able to securely dispose of tens of thousands of pounds of paper files, freeing up valuable office space**

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