

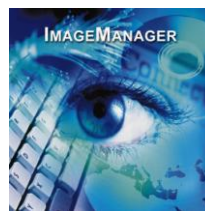


Optimizing your Eye Care Practice for a New Era of Information Technology & Value-Driven Health Care

Series, Part 2: Incorporating New Technologies into Your Practice



the Optometric EHR



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Have you heard?

- New influences on your practice are creating significant change; analyzing and adjusting are critical skills for the health and well-being of your business.
- Value-driven health care will mean that the procedures and policies in your office need to be re-visited.
- Health care changes will affect your ability to generate income.
- The technologies utilized in value-driven eye care give you powerful tools for providing care to your patients.

This brief paper is Part 2 of a series, a sequel to our *White Paper for Optometry: Pay-for-Performance & Value Driven Health Care*. It is our purpose throughout the series to elaborate on the essential understandings and actions for optometrists in the face of health care and eye care reform. A second and express purpose herein is to reveal what EMRlogic is doing through OD Professional and ImageManager to help you prepare for the new challenges and opportunities arising in value-driven eye care. New technologies utilized in ODPro may be applied in your office in ways that allow you to reach a whole new dimension in patient care.

Part 2: Incorporating New Technologies Into Your Practice

Overview: 4 New Technologies for Better Patient Care - the OD Professional Managers Suite

1. ConnectionManager
2. ImageManager
3. PatientManager
4. ActionManager

Review: Understanding Interoperability

As seen in our white paper, interoperability means that every piece of equipment and every Electronic Health Record can share information with every other. In your optometric practice, that means there must be a flow of electronic data from your diagnostic instruments to your EHRs and from your EHRs to every type of industry partner you deal with. This will apply first and foremost to your insurance payers, in particular to Medicare since CMS is at the heart of the pay-for-performance movement. However, it should not escape the notice of those who wish to take advantage of the new opportunities we have alluded to that interoperability applies to every entity we deal with in the health care environment.

ConnectionManager – a Whole New Dimension of Communications Technologies for your Everyday Processes

OD Professional is set apart by an interoperability technology toolset that already leads the industry and has provided some never-before-seen capabilities in the eye care industry. Since the toolset is not always visible, like *Intel Inside*, we decided to give it a name: we call it ConnectionManager. ConnectionManager shows up in many different ways but all help you get and stay connected, either within your own office or with industry partners outside your office.

Whole new dimension, sample 1: lab catalogs, orders and dispensary jobs. Think about the last time you had to revise your price list, that same one everybody keeps losing. Worse, how about when you had to type your entire lens catalog into your software? And what about keeping track of what you buy from your three different labs? So many details, so many potential errors!

Imagine if your software could download your lab's catalog and let you customize it for what you buy from that lab. And what if the technology could help you set up all your pricing quickly and easily? What if you couldn't choose an incorrect combination of lens type and material or place an order for something the lab doesn't sell? Or how about if your lab order was always automatically error-checked while the patient was still in front of you? Could these things improve your efficiency in the dispensary?

Of course, you guessed it, ODPro does all those things. It's all part of our interoperability toolset that allows us to communicate in real time with your optical lab through the VisionWeb portal. (For the techies in the audience, it's called Web Services with WSDL and XML.) But be aware, not every software with a VisionWeb interface can do these things. In fact, none that we know of can do all that's described above. We're leading the industry in this area.

Whole new dimension, sample 2: pain relief for insurance billing and payment posting. We talk with insurance billing specialists every day and have become of the opinion that this is by far one of the most complex jobs in the industry. Such people should be highly revered, or at least given a raise! As much as we'd love to declare software as the silver bullet to end all insurance woes, it's simply not the case. The process still needs a thinking, breathing, very smart manager.

Nevertheless, software can ease the pain. The first challenge is to question how "free" it really is to go online to all your different payers' websites and re-key your claims. It's a common scenario today and one of those office policies and procedures that many practices must re-visit. This is not a picture of efficiency and it certainly does not constitute interoperability. Data must flow from your software to your payer. The clearinghouse is a low-fee means of achieving tremendous speed and efficiency gains.

A note about HIPAA 837/835. HIPAA established modern, standardized electronic formats for insurance claims. 837 refers to the claims submission while 835 refers to the electronic remittance for payment posting. Few insurance payers provide automated remittances but this

will become the norm over the next few years. Leading clearinghouses are already assisting in this process since they are the “covered entity” and can help get you to this point more quickly than working directly with payers individually.

Imagine once again, your claims go out in batches, any way any time you choose. In some cases, the Explanation of Benefits may be posted electronically to the patients’ ledgers. When that’s not available, a step-by-step wizard walks you through the payment-posting process. How great is that? Could that ease the pain just a little? OD Professional uses the most advanced standards and technologies available to get you fast, painless claims reimbursements.

Whole new dimension, sample 3: effortless referral reports and specialist consults. Unless you enjoy that stack of charts on your desk, you probably find writing consults and managing reports (both those you send and those you receive) to be time-consuming and often frustrating. Not having a specialist’s report by the time the patient is back in your chair for a follow-up, looking for a misfiled report, or getting the call that a referral office cannot find your consult, all are frequent irritations with the typical written referral system. OD Professional and ImageManager utilize advanced portability standards to make this process efficient, dependable and less expensive.

The writing process becomes simple. Since most information needed is already contained in your ODPro EHRs, reports and consults may be generated at the touch of a button. ODPro simply extracts pre-determined data fields and completes the consult or report form, allowing you also to customize it as necessary.

Information not already in ODPro from your exam may be added with simple pop-up checklists, or entered directly. If you already have a way of generating reports and consults that you like, the report may be brought right into ImageManager and the file sent electronically.

Most important, the combination of ODPro and ImageManager provides a method of generating reports and consults so easily and quickly that you will want to complete it right in the exam room. The office to which you are sending the consult or report can receive it before the patient leaves your office. That’s one less handoff, one less task for staff in both offices.

ImageManager includes the ability for you to receive electronic reports and consults and also provides the capability for your referral offices to exchange paperless communications with your office. No doubt, your staff spends a considerable amount of time pulling charts in order to file faxes, letters and other correspondence. With ImageManager portability, that staff time all but disappears.

Whole new dimension, sample 4: electronically auditable reports. This capability may seem uninspiring at first glance, but let’s look more closely. Auditing is a powerful tool for driving flawless consistency in your practice. ODPro’s XML reports can be read like a Word document or audited through computer processes. This means you have the capability of constantly reviewing your charts to make sure everything that should have been done was, in fact, accomplished. It also allows you to mine data from the reports, seeking lost opportunities where perhaps in-office procedures are not being followed by all staff. Internal audits are a very effective means of constantly improving process.

Eventually, as value-driven health care becomes more engrained into everyday practice, we will see increasing demands to send auditable reports to payers. ODPro already has the built-in ability to generate any audit reports you will need in the future. A word of caution, therefore: many software programs today offer referral reports and letters. On the surface, it is not always apparent whether the report is a simple text (word-processing) document or an XML document. On the screen, the two may look identical. Look under the hood by asking, “Is that an XML document?” The most important difference is that a simple text document cannot easily be analyzed by a computer. It is designed to be read by human eyes. An XML document, though appearing similar to a text document, actually maintains all information as separate fields that can then be used by computers in audits, and allows the data to be extracted and used in any way necessary. Full portability and interoperability between systems requires XML.

ImageManager – Communicating Efficiently with the Rest of Health Care

We began this paper with a brief understanding of interoperability. ImageManager is an interoperability tool *par excellence*. True to its name, it manages your image files be they from a camera, a visual field instrument or a variety of other diagnostic instruments, even scanned referral letters and reports. ImageManager is also a communications tool and telemedicine solution that can bring life to your referral network.

View all your diagnostic tests and images in every exam room. Through ImageManager, you may view specialized tests and images in every exam room. Your OCT's , fundus images, GDx's, slit-lamp images, and so on can be viewed in any exam room or on any computer. You will be more efficient in your office by having all such information available everywhere you need it. More important, the images and tests can be easily included in reports and consults to other health care providers.

Image library for patient education. Since your pay-for-performance outcomes will be dramatically influenced by patient compliance, you will most likely find more of your effort in the future directed at ensuring the patient is well informed about his or her condition and knows exactly what to do to comply with your recommendations. ImageManager contains a powerful patient education tool that allows you to build a library of images you can use in your case summations or any time you need to demonstrate to the patient what a condition looks like or how it can progress. Especially powerful are images series that show the progression of a condition or what it may look like after treatment. The use of the image library can make your discussion with the patient more effective and enable you to reach a higher level of patient understanding in less time. The library can be completely tailored to your needs.

Paperless reports including images and diagnostic test results. ImageManager can generate reports that attach images or diagnostic tests you wish to send alongside a consult when referring a patient to a specialist, or simply another office. The reports are automatically generated, sent electronically, received and viewed electronically and, thereby eliminate almost all the time, expense and frustration of a paper-based system. All reports and consults between offices are maintained in chronological order associated with any special testing done. This

organizes the flow of information such that data from other offices may be incorporated into your workflow and decision making process. The sharing of test results will become increasingly important as payers stop paying for duplication of tests. It will become essential for you to use test results from other offices since you likely will not be reimbursed for repeating them. ImageManager combines the flow of information from multiple offices into a useful, organized format.

Such technology opens a new avenue for you. It allows you to share your equipment with other offices or to access equipment you do not have. Read further in this series for a discussion of new equipment-sharing opportunities.

XML reports allow each communicating office to utilize contained information. As mentioned already, ImageManager will generate reports and consults that are much more powerful than traditional text documents. ODPro's ImageManager will allow you to generate XML reports at the touch of a button and send them electronically to any other office. That office can then use its own XML-compatible EHR to extract specific data from your report to be used in any way they deem necessary. Likewise, you may do the same with the electronic reports you receive.

For example, you want to graph a record of visual acuity and intraocular pressure so you can detect changes at any given point in time and correlate changes with new conditions or treatments. With XML document sharing, the IOP and VA can be extracted from the reports you receive then used in your graphs to provide an inclusive representation of each time the patient was seen anywhere, not just during the visits to your office.

Image Capture. ImageManager has image capture capability from many fundus cameras as well as slit-lamp systems. It can also capture images from specialty cameras for photorefraction, and other image documentation.

This provides two benefits for your office. First, all images captured in this way are automatically incorporated into your EHRs, able to be included in reports and consults, as well as being available for your patient management decisions. New images, re-saved anonymously, also provide an ongoing source for your patient education library.

ImageManager, serving as your image-capture software, can save you a considerable sum when purchasing new imaging equipment. Fundus and slit-lamp camera systems are available for purchase without software, making a difference of thousands of dollars. As patient compliance becomes more important to your measured outcomes, imaging will become a more important services component. ImageManager makes this process efficient and can save you money along the way.

Become the information-management leader in your local medical community. As you read our series, *Optimizing your Eye Care Practice for a New Era of Information Technology & Value-Driven Health Care*, you will find you become more knowledgeable about technologies that will eventually be used throughout healthcare. You'll know more than the majority of your colleagues in your local health care community. Do not underestimate the value of such knowledge.

Just as transparency, pay-for-performance and every other component of value-driven health care is affecting your practice, it is having a similar impact on every other health care practice in the country. The old way of doing things is changing. Everyone is looking for the best way to position their practices in the newly emerging health care system. Information management, including portability and effective sharing of information, are keys to success in the new value-driven system.

Sharing with your local colleagues what you know about value-driven health care may result in improved referral relationships that you did not think possible, not to mention improved acceptance of the care you provide in the local health care community. For more information on this topic, read further in our series, “Becoming the local leader in the movement toward value-driven health care”.

Initiating processes in your practice that improve patient compliance

Pay-for-performance adds a new dimension to an eye care provider’s responsibility. The doctor’s responsibility for clinical outcomes will not end when the patient leaves the office. In traditional care, we could provide the best care possible in the office, make our recommendations and instruct the patient on the diagnosis and treatment plan. Our responsibility more or less ended at that point with the patient then responsible to follow our recommendations.

New pay-for-performance standards leave little or no division between the doctor’s responsibility and the responsibility of the patient to be compliant. Your outcome measures will incorporate how well the patient complies with your recommendations.

Outcomes incorporate patient compliance. In pay-for-performance eye care, quality of care will be measured against best clinical outcomes. Consider the following two examples and decide which pattern of care you think is deserving of a better quality score. Keep in mind that numerous studies have shown very low compliance rates for virtually any condition involving chronic use of medication.

Office #1 has every piece of latest equipment for the diagnosis and treatment of glaucoma. The provider takes a tremendous amount of extra CE and is very experienced in glaucoma management. The practice is meticulous in explaining during the appointment what the patient must do to follow the management plan correctly. Every patient is pre-appointed for the next appointment and missed appointments are followed up with a phone call to make sure the patient comes in again. This office, however, has no method of assessing how well the patient complies with the treatment plan between visits other than by asking the patient at the time of the next visit.

Office #2 owns very little in the way of diagnostic instrumentation and actually must refer patients to an equipment center for most specialized testing. Test results are sent promptly back to the office. The practice still has access to all the latest technology though little financial outlay has been made to access the equipment. Instead, the practice has invested in an automatic follow-up process that constantly assesses compliance throughout the care cycle.

This office finds through continuous surveys to every patient that about 60% of patients are “fully compliant” on any chronic treatment, that 20% are “usually compliant” and about 20% are consistently “non-compliant”. It also finds that in most non-compliant situations, simple suggestions are able to assist the patient in becoming more compliant. They find that through the process of constantly assessing patient compliance, with minimal time demands on the practitioner, they are able eventually to obtain a consistent rate of over 85% compliance with the management plan for patients.

Which of these offices, in your opinion, will achieve better outcomes? Pay-for-performance and value-driven health care will demand that we begin thinking of the total package of care and how that care impacts outcomes. Deciding where and how to invest will remain a practice-owners decision. Investment decisions may be different under value-driven health care than they currently are under pay-for-performance. Certainly, a new area of investment will be in tools that help improve patient compliance.

PatientManager – Surveying & Educating your Patients ... with *Wow!* Factor

The process of monitoring patient compliance is expensive in a non-electronic office. Managed electronically as an integral part of your EHRs, it becomes affordable for even the smallest of practices. Patient Relationship Management (PRM) is an extremely important function that will directly affect both the bottom line and the quality of care your office delivers. ODPro offers you a powerful tool to monitor and improve patient compliance: PatientManager.

Imagine once again. You enter a patient’s email address in your software and the patient is automatically registered in your PRM solution. Your office’s welcome letter is generated and delivered instantly, providing your new patient a personalized web page where he or she can immediately begin the process of telling you about family history, hobbies, interests and the reason for visit. This data creates a patient profile and begins to identify relevant patient education materials – articles of interest, 3D artistic renderings of the eye and applicable pathologies. These materials can be accessed by the patient from home but also by you in the exam room, within OD Professional at the click of a button! Appointment confirmations and reminders, recalls and product expiration notices are all generated and sent with no staff intervention.

Keep on visualizing. PatientManager supplies you with a new article on early detection of diabetes. You read it, you’re impressed and think, “I’d like to send this to a few patients.” Another mouse-click and the software tells you this article is applicable to 47 of your patients. Would you like to send it to them now?

Surveys and follow-up questionnaires. Perhaps you have a number of questions you’d like to ask your patients after they’ve begun using their medications. Are you using your medications as prescribed? Are you having any difficulties? Are you experiencing stinging with your drops? Following through on patient responses requires further instruction for those whose experience is less than ideal.

You see the picture. You're well on your way to improving your patients' perception of quality service. And you've thrown in a whole bunch of WOW factor too! PatientManager is OD Professional's leading edge PRM solution to put you in control of improving patient compliance.

ActionManager – Driving Best Practices, Flawless Consistency & Patient Satisfaction

What else can we do then to influence and enhance our patients' perception of value? At OD Professional, we asked that question of our clients. What do you need software to do that will improve patient care and benefit your business at the same time? The answer: flawless consistency.

ActionManager is a workflow system that attaches your patient's file to a specific "roadmap" for each visit type. The roadmap is a template for patient flow from check-in through check-out, pre-determined by you according to your best practices. Used properly, the net effect of ActionManager is flawless consistency. Where would you like the patient to go? At each stop, what things would you like done every time?

Workflow is a common term in medical offices, usually referring to clinical workflow and decision-making. That's a particular concern for doctors and we agree it is important. However, only OD Professional offers true *patient* workflow management. We have all heard it said, "what's good for the patient is good for the practice." ActionManager is an important and unique technology within OD Professional that helps you do what is good for the patient. When patient after patient walks out the door satisfied and smiling because everything was done according to best practices and in a timely fashion, you have not only provided the highest level of care you have a process that will continue to build the asset value of your practice.

Our series continues. Be sure to read ...

"Optimizing your Eye Care Practice" Series, Part 3. New Programs, New Opportunities

Learn about specific actions you can initiate now to take advantage of emerging markets and new opportunities in value-driven health care.

1. Diabetes early-detection program
2. Equipment sharing
3. Increasing imaging services
4. Hot-topics research programs