



Optimizing Moments: What our customers are saying



Largest privately-held pediatric practice in U.S. implements Physician Scheduler® to manage enterprise-wide scheduling.

Pediatric Associates uses real-time schedule access and automated change notifications to manage growing staff of physicians and clinicians.

With a growing network of medical offices throughout four counties in South Florida, supported by a staff of more than 130 pediatricians and 350 clinical staff, Pediatric Associates recognized it needed to gain centralized, automated control over its physician and staff scheduling. The practice's manual, paper-based scheduling processes were inefficient, labor intensive and unable to reliably meet increasing, complex patient coverage requirements, as well as deliver up-to-date, real-time communication and schedule notifications to its pediatricians and staff. That's why Fort Lauderdale-based Pediatric Associates, the largest, privately held pediatric practice in the U.S. by patient volume, implemented Physician Scheduler® from Durham, N.C.-based Clairvia® in 2009.

"Physician Scheduler has met our expectations," says Doreen Levin, the practice's Chief Information Officer. "It was very important that we put into place a single, integrated software product that could address our growing, enterprise-wide practice environment. We have well over 100 pediatricians supported by hundreds of clinical and lab staff working among 21 different office locations, some open every day of the year and well into the evening. As you can imagine, managing these schedules and ensuring proper coverage for our patient volume can be quite complicated. We've been very favorably impressed by the ability of Physician Scheduler to accommodate our large practice and complex scheduling requirements."

One, integrated solution for managing enterprise-wide physician and staff scheduling

With offices and staff throughout Florida's Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and St. Lucie counties, Pediatric Associates sought a way to synchronize interdependent schedules between its physicians and clinical staff. "We now have one automated solution that provides up-to-date, individualized scheduling information to all of our staff—physicians as well as lab and clinical staff—and ensures that we have adequate coverage to meet patients' needs at every location. We schedule our clinical staff by the number of doctors on hand," she explains. "When there are changes to physician schedules, it's very important that our office staff adjusts to meet those changes. For instance, previously, we might have had a patient appointment in a particular office without the right physician and staff on hand. Now, as soon as a change in the schedule occurs, all office managers get notified to ensure proper patient coverage."

Physician Scheduler has moved scheduling at Pediatric Associates from a fragmented process to a highly organized, integrated process says Jack Cohen, M.D., who directs physician scheduling for the group. "Because we have multiple physician schedules, which include coverage for weekdays, evenings, overnight call, Saturday mornings, weekend urgent care and hospital rounds, it became obvious that we needed a way to consolidate all this information into one, concise, central access point," says Jack Cohen, M.D., who directs physician scheduling for the group. "Due to our expansion and growth over the years, it became clear that our scheduling methods and capabilities had reached the end of their lifecycles. It was time for something better."

An integrated, rules-based system, Physician Scheduler has been able to address the group's specific practice requirements. "We like that it offers us the flexibility of accommodating our established scheduling methodologies while automatically generating standard schedule patterns and ensuring that each physician's scheduling and work requirements, stipulated by contract, are met," says Ms. Levin.

Immediate, real-time communication and convenient, individualized access to scheduling

Physician Scheduler's Web-based access and real-time, automated email alerts enable Pediatric Associates to keep its physicians and staff constantly informed and immediately aware of changes that affect their work schedules and free time. "The fact that our physicians and staff can easily and conveniently access their own schedules over the Web is very significant," expresses Ms. Levin. "Previously, our physicians had to wade through numerous paper spreadsheets to find their own schedules, and, frequently, schedules were not up to date."

Along with accessing their schedules over the Web, physicians and staff can now request days off and vacation, as well as submit other scheduling changes online. For the scheduler, approving or denying a request involves just a few mouse clicks. When a schedule change is made, the software automatically updates the schedule and sends confirmation alerts by email to everyone involved.

Before Physician Scheduler was implemented at the practice, providing physicians with accurate, up-to-date scheduling information was a considerable challenge. “Revised schedules were posted only once a week,” reports Dr. Cohen, “usually on Sunday evening, but changes were actually being made on a daily basis. Physicians and staff, therefore, were often viewing inaccurate, outdated schedules. Furthermore, they had to sift through extensive, practice-wide schedules in order to find information that was specific to their individual needs. Now, they can easily go to the website and view their own schedules in real time. Everything they need to see in regard to their own schedule, including back-up schedules, nursery rounds schedules, days off and vacation requests, is there and current.”

Physician Scheduler’s Shift Opportunities feature is valuable in helping to fill any holes in schedules. “With this feature,” add Ms. Levin, “we post open shifts on the Web so that all staff members can sign up to fill holes in the schedule and earn extra money. Everyone has open access to available shift slots. Before, we had to call around or email to the different offices to check if people were interested, and it was very time consuming.”

Improved efficiency and greatly reduced manual processing

Converting from a disconnected, paper-based scheduling process to a centralized, automated system has improved overall practice efficiency and eliminated many manual, time-intensive tasks. “Previously, simple changes, complex changes, vacation requests and personal time requests were all submitted on separate paper forms,” Dr. Cohen recalls. “This information would then have to be manually transferred to the appropriate schedule in preparation for the weekly upload and recorded in the appropriate tracking file for bookkeeping purposes. And since we put out schedules three months in advance, you can imagine how many changes to existing schedules we were continually receiving.”

This paper-driven approach made it difficult to maintain and access accurate schedules and placed excessive work loads on office staff and the scheduler. “After any change was made,” Dr. Cohen says, “we had to track down, usually by phone, all the parties affected by the change. It was quite labor intensive and arduous just to make a simple change in the schedule. The amount of time required to do this was extensive. Now, with Physician Scheduler’s automated change notification, all physicians and staff get immediate email alerts. It’s highly efficient and there is minimal manual work required.”

A boost to physician and staff satisfaction

While it has taken time for some physicians and staff to get fully comfortable using an automated system, Pediatric Associates reports that Physician Scheduler has rapidly gained supportive users. “All of our people—physicians and staff—have expressed their satisfaction with it,” says Ms. Levin. “They really like that their individual schedules are accessible, and that they can view them anywhere through the Web. They know that the software is a big pick-up for them in terms of ease of use and convenience.”

Dr. Cohen emphasizes that while converting to an automated system has its challenges, “people have adapted to the Physician Scheduler software and recognize there are clear benefits, particularly the real-time communication.”

The potential for additional, ongoing benefits

In the months and years ahead, Pediatric Associates expects to leverage Physician Scheduler for reporting and data integration with other software systems. “We’re in the early stages of examining the software’s reporting capabilities,” reports Ms. Levin. “For instance, since we have centralized access to all scheduling data, we can analyze staffing patterns and improve financial planning.”

In addition, Pediatric Associates plans to establish an interface so that worked hours in Physician Scheduler can be imported into the group’s payroll system, further reducing manual data input and time-consuming processing steps. “We now have all the data we need to run tailored reports,” says Dr. Cohen. “It’s really impressive what the software can do for us. When I think about how we were handling scheduling before Physician Scheduler as compared to now, the improvements and potential for further benefits are significant.”

About Pediatric Associates

Founded in Hollywood, Fla. in 1955, Pediatric Associates is one of the oldest and most comprehensive pediatric practices in the United States. As one of the first medical practices to introduce satellite office locations staffed by multiple physicians, the organization provides primary pediatric care to infants, children and adolescents throughout South Florida.

Serving more than 21 communities in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and St. Lucie counties, Pediatric Associates is staffed by more than 130 physicians and 350 clinical staff members. As a comprehensive pediatric care practice, Pediatric Associates provides complete on-site services, such as lab and X-ray, free support groups, chronic disease management assistance and educational and safety classes and events.

About Clairvia®

Clairvia serves more than 1,200 healthcare organizations, medical facilities, nursing departments, and group practices with advanced software solutions for patient and staff management.

Clairvia Care Value Management (CVM) is a comprehensive software suite that empowers healthcare providers to deliver the right care-givers to each patient—at the right time—to achieve the next, desired level of wellness. In more than 200 successful implementations, Clairvia CVM has driven measurable improvements in quality of care, patient safety, patient throughput and financial performance, as well as patient, staff and physician satisfaction.

The complete Clairvia CVM solution includes the following software products:

- Staff Manager
- Demand Manager
- Patient Progress Manager
- Outcomes-Driven Patient Acuity
- Demand-Driven Patient Assignment

For more information, visit www.clairvia.com.

