

## Bankruptcy and Back: Tale of a Successful EMR Implementation



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### Coastal ENT

Solo ENT specialty practice

Savannah, GA

Imagine the heartache of going bankrupt after over a decade of serving patients in a multi physician ENT practice. Dr. David Oliver practiced with six physicians in a Savannah, GA-based ENT practice for 15 years. A few years ago, he was indeed going bankrupt. The main culprit: the practice had transitioned from paper charts to an inefficient EMR software system that turned out to be a money pit. There were also some bad business decisions that had been made.

### Averting Bankruptcy

NextGen was our EMR. It killed our productivity, it was crushingly expensive and it absolutely ruined our practice. I was going bankrupt,” said Dr. Oliver, adding, “There were big licensing fees upfront, a big purchase price, and big monthly licensing fees. You have to have your own servers and you have to pour money into your infrastructure. The problem with those EMR systems is that they are not designed for ENT—that is, for specialists. I can order a pap smear more easily than I can order CPAPs. They don’t give you any support for integrating your EMR.”

### Going Solo

Intent on putting his dire financial and business problems with the multi provider otolaryngology practice behind him, Dr. Oliver decided to open Coastal ENT, a solo ENT practice.

Noting that his wife is a certified procedural coder and that she has a degree in healthcare management, Dr. Oliver said, “She had already done a lot of work and she talked to me a lot about the problems with our EMR system. I was trying to work through those things, but it really caused a



***“I look at the patient, I examine the patient and I am interacting with the patient. I could put the information in the computer myself, but then I would be taking attention away from my patient and I would be talking half sentences while looking at the computer and using it. Instead, I have a Medical Scribe who inputs that data in WRS and I can have eye contact and interaction with my patient.”***

lot of conflict in our practice because I was telling these guys, ‘Why did you get this EMR system? It doesn’t do this, it doesn’t do that.’ The doctors were feeling some pressure from me that the system was not performing. By the time I left the practice, my wife had already figured out how we were going to do it. When we made the decision to leave the practice it was just a natural thing for us to fall into Waiting Room Solutions. We looked at four EMR systems. There was nothing as comprehensive as WRS. The integration I have with clearinghouses and other systems is great.”

## Seeing More Patients

Dr. Oliver credits Waiting Room Solutions for enabling him to see 19 patients in three hours in the morning and as many as 25 to 30 in the afternoon, compared to 12 patients a day in his former practice. “My patient load is bigger and I can handle additional work on the computer. I can also make adjustments to the program. In the three years I’ve had Waiting Room Solutions their team has been very responsive,” asserted Dr. Oliver.

## Meeting Face to Face

WRS is also enabling Dr. Oliver to interact more closely with Coastal ENT’s patients. His Medical Scribe inputs patient information into the EMR while he interacts directly with the patient. “I ask the patient questions about their illness and the Medical Scribe puts that information into the system. This is only after the patients have also been through the intake process, where we get the basics about why they are here, and what medicines they are taking. Then, when they are in the room with me, I don’t want to look at the computer and work on the computer while interacting with patients.” said Dr. Oliver.

Dr. Oliver went on to explain that he checks the data at the end of the visit. He added, “I can have eye to eye contact and interaction with the patient. When I’m examining the patient, I’m telling them about their exam and that provides information to the Scribe to allow them to put an exam into the system. Medical Scribes understand the things that we look for. Similarly, I’m telling them what tests the patients are going to have, what the diagnoses is, how we are going to treat it, and

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with what medicines—they are putting all of that information in. That’s what gets me through the day.”

## **Slicing Costs**

When it comes to affordability, Dr. Oliver is all smiles. “There’s several reasons why WRS is so affordable. In addition to the great price, you don’t have to buy servers or pay for upgrades to the system. You also don’t have to do a makeover to your computer system’s infrastructure.” Dr. Oliver said.

A practicing Otolaryngologist created WRS cloud system and that’s another reason that makes WRS unique from the competition. “I was impressed that WRS was developed by a physician who uses the system. Computer wizards may create programs that look great, but when a doctor uses it, there’s a problem with functionality,” asserted Dr. Oliver.

From his otolaryngology practitioner’s perch, Dr. Oliver sees Waiting Room Solutions as a malleable EMR system for an ENT specialty practice. “You can change things easily. On a day to day basis you can adapt the system to your practice model and to what your needs are and to your practice style. The other thing is that it doesn’t break. That’s good for anybody. But it’s certainly good for a solo practitioner.”

## **Getting Paid Pronto**

Emphasizing that there are some major disadvantages for a solo practitioner who doesn’t have an EMR, Dr. Oliver said that many of the EMR systems in the marketplace pose an incredible burden in decreased productivity and “never earn you a penny.”

“My wife is very knowledgeable about what needs to be done to be efficient when it comes to billing. Because WRS is integrated with the clearinghouses there’s a plethora of benefits in the system when it comes to the business aspect of the practice. WRS prevents your practice from going bankrupt. WRS helps you bill and do so. If you don’t have a good ENT EMR you may have

a system that doesn't tell you when there are changes in your payment schedule from the insurance companies. All of a sudden, insurance companies will decide they are not going to pay you for 'xyz' and they drop your reimbursement 10% on some of the things that you do regularly. You are guarded against those kinds of things by having WRS—an EMR system that is integrated and that keeps you up with all the facets of the financial side of your practice.”

## **It Pays To Offer Incentives**

Dr. Oliver is encouraging his patients to use Waiting Room Solutions robust ENT patient portal. Realizing that they have to adjust to using the system, Dr. Oliver said he has found that it doesn't hurt to offer incentives to his staff and patients. “If patients go on the portal and sign in before they get here and input all their data into WRS we give them an ENT insulated cup. It's a neat little gift that helps to increase usage of the patient portal.”

## **E-prescribing Is A Must Have Feature**

Yet another advantage of using Waiting Room Solutions at Coastal ENT is that the system offers an e-prescribing capability. “I use e-prescribing every day, all day long. The only thing I can't use it for is narcotics. I use it 99.9% of the time. It's very direct. I don't have any problems with pharmacies not getting my prescriptions,” stated Dr. Oliver.

## **Quality Of Life**

If you ask physicians whether having WRS frees them up for more leisure time, they will say yes. Not so with Dr. Oliver. He's using WRS to actually get more work done at Coastal ENT. “Day in and day out I work all day long. I'm working more. My hours are long. I'm getting more done and I'm more efficient. If you want to see a certain number of patients and only do certain things, WRS would make it an easy thing to do. If my number one goal is to see only four patients an hour and never work past five o' clock I could do that with WRS. You could get all your notes done and walk out at 5 p.m. But that's not where I am in my life now. I am maxing out my productivity. My EMR allows me to pile on as much work as I can humanly do,” said Dr. Oliver.

## **Peering In The Crystal Ball**

Now that Dr. Oliver has implemented the most efficient software solution, he's betting that WRS will help him to offer yet another enhancement. He envisions providing patients with a feature that will enable him to phone, text or e-mail patients if the practice is running behind schedule.

Finally, Dr. Oliver said, “WRS needs to be lauded. I want other practitioners to use the system. It's

going to help my brothers and sisters and my patients.”