Microsoft Dynamics GP Serves as Strong Backbone for Progressive Orthopaedic Firm

“Our physicians take great pride in knowing that Orthopaedic Associates is on the cutting-edge of technology with a solid foundation built on Microsoft solutions, with the core being our financial management software, Microsoft Dynamics GP.”
– Ann Jewell, Finance Director, OAM

Since its founding in the early ‘70s, Orthopaedic Associates of Michigan (OAM) has been on the progressive edge of healthcare. The practice’s vision is to offer extensive expertise, more comprehensive patient care, and a network of highly-skilled specialists than can tackle any challenge and handle any condition. In short, OAM strives to provide all the medical expertise and capabilities that a large entity brings while delivering it with the intimacy and individualized attention found in small practices.

By establishing small specialty practices – known as centers of excellence – OAM makes it possible for physicians and staff to keep pace with leading-edge diagnostic and treatment breakthroughs while continuing to deliver personalized care. Each center has access to onsite technology, therapists, and technicians, and they share record-keeping and support staff to help maintain a continuity of care for patients requiring referrals to other specialists.

In addition to its centers of excellence – Foot & Ankle Center; Hand & Upper Extremity Center; Physical Medicine Center; Spine Center; Sports Medicine Center; Total Joint Center; and Trauma Center – OAM recently added an Osteoporosis Clinic.

Located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, OAM has more than 30 physicians and approximately 270 staff members.

Vital to OAM’s success is a strong financial management and information technology (IT) backbone. It didn’t take long for OAM to determine that it was rapidly outgrowing its QuickBooks accounting software.
Situation
While QuickBooks had served OAM well for some time, in the mid 1990s it became increasingly obvious that the practice needed a more robust financial management solution with better reporting capabilities.

OAM needed the ability to quickly pull key information per department and/or per center of excellence. Additionally, at OAM, one of the largest medical practice groups in Michigan, the independent physicians are separate profit and loss entities. As a result, the practice needed the ability to allocate various costs and expenses to specific physicians using complex calculations and variables. With QuickBooks, costs and expenses were basically put into one “big bucket” and then split equally across the physicians. The process was less than fair and was ripe for confidentiality issues.

OAM also knew that with its growth, it needed a technology partner that could quickly provide insightful on-site or remote assistance to its financial management system questions.

The practice’s progressive vision was evident even within its technology choices. In 1995, Microsoft Dynamics GP (then known as Great Plains) was the leading Microsoft Windows® accounting package. The TM Group, Michigan’s most experienced Gold Certified Microsoft Dynamics partner, represented the solution. OAM chose Microsoft Dynamics GP – and The TM Group – to replace QuickBooks and hasn’t looked back.

OAM has grown significantly since 1995, and its Microsoft Dynamics GP solution has grown with it. Along the way, The TM Group has provided consistently sound support and expert advice. “Since the very beginning of our process, The TM Group has been our trusted advisor, a virtual business partner we’ve come to rely upon for proven expertise,” says Jewell. “Working in partnership with The TM Group, we’ve evolved our IT capabilities to support our organization’s goal of overall excellence.”

Solution
While delivering high-quality care is the number one priority for OAM, reducing costs is always imperative. The key to this is finding ways to streamline processes, eliminate inefficiency, increase productivity, and improve decision-making, thereby allowing physicians and staff to spend more time on patient-focused activities.

The powerful, integrated IT infrastructure provided by Microsoft Dynamics GP makes it easier to share patient information for clinical decisions and cross-organizational case coordination, as well as access the financial data required to drive business decisions. The solution enables physicians, assistants and administrators to work together as a single team.

“We are a highly automated office, the foundation of which is our financial system, Microsoft Dynamics GP,” says Jewell. “It’s critical that we have a solid technology solution in place since seamless automation is a cornerstone of our excellence. The more automated we are, the more time and energy we spend delivering better, more affordable patient services rather than performing manual tasks.”

Specific benefits OAM has realized with its Microsoft Dynamics GP solution include:

Improving profitability by increasing productivity:
By implementing a solution based on Microsoft technology, OAM has increased productivity by leveraging its investment in Microsoft Dynamics GP and building on its solid foundation. The company has saved several hours a month keying in timecards by implementing an integrated time clock system. Now with Time Matrix they can see real-time information on hourly employees. The time clock also keeps track of wage allocation by department and cost center, eliminating the need for an estimated allocation at month end. OAM has also implemented a fully integrated document imaging solution from Kwiktag. Purchasing documents are scanned and automatically
linked to source records in Microsoft Dynamics GP. Supporting documentation is now a click away and no longer requires manual retrieval from a cabinet drawer. Also, OAM is continuing to eliminate manual and redundant tasks by integrating its patient billing system, NextGen, with its Microsoft Dynamics GP solution.

**Improved Reporting:**
Implementation of Microsoft Dynamics GP has provided OAM with real-time, improved management information. Previously, comparing profitability among different areas of the business required time-consuming manual processes. Now, the reporting tools in Microsoft Dynamics GP, FRx and Microsoft SQL Server provide management with highly visible, real-time information to effectively make decisions regarding the practice. Monthly financial statement distribution is also now shared electronically using the FRx Report Server, eliminating the need to distribute printed financial statements to each physician and leadership.

**Streamline Processes**
OAM needs departmental reporting that is completed quickly and with professional-looking results. Because of the nature of its structure (multiple physicians operating as independent profit and loss centers), accurate allocation reporting is a must. With Microsoft Dynamics GP, such reporting is a snap as automatic allocations are performed using standard functionality. Direct expenses such as per day room use and help from assistants, as well as indirect expenses such as building rent and electricity, are easily and quickly allocated to the appropriate physician. Before Microsoft Dynamics GP, such allocation reporting was attempted through spreadsheets and manual calculations. The integrated posting of indirect expenses alone easily saves OAM’s accounting team two hours per month, and the chance of error is dramatically reduced.

**Eliminate Inefficiency**
Since implementing Microsoft Dynamics GP, OAM has realized a steady stream of improved efficiencies. As the practice itself has grown, so have the ways that OAM takes advantage of and integrates to its Microsoft Dynamics GP solution. One example is the use of its Time Matrix solution, which is an automated time clock system that integrates tightly with payroll in Microsoft Dynamics GP, even from three separate OAM locations. Additionally, OAM has added document imaging which has all but eliminated the need for paper invoicing. Patient charts are all electronically logged and comply with HIPAA regulations.

“Accuracy can run amuck when dealing with human error,” says Jewell, “but with Microsoft Dynamics GP, we know we don’t have to double-check anything within the solution.”

**Increase Productivity**
Key to increased productivity for OAM is the fact that Microsoft Dynamics GP has a “look and feel” familiar to most users. The solution not only presents the same user interface as Microsoft Office applications, but also lets you work with information from the business management solution directly within these Microsoft Office system programs.

“Even users with no previous Microsoft Dynamics GP experience are trained and up and running in a couple days,” says Jewell. “If users have a Windows or Outlook background, they get acclimated to it very easily and quickly.”

**Improve Decision-making**
In the past, monthly packets were prepared for physicians in a labor-intensive – and more error prone process. Today, with the help of Microsoft FRx, detailed monthly report booklets are generated without manual input and are prepared in mere minutes. Rather than printing the reports and leaving a pile of paper on the physicians’ desks, the reports are e-mailed, giving the physicians the option of accessing the reports, where and how it works best with their schedules.

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…”with Microsoft Dynamics GP, we know we don’t have to double-check anything within the solution.”
Physicians can quickly and conveniently review financial data and make decisions based on up-to-date information.

**Enhance Patient Care**
With patient charts being completely electronic, information can be shared online quickly between physicians. Electronic charts have also allowed faster and more accurate information. Digital x-rays can be pulled up online rather than being manually transported from physician to physician. Ultimately, OAM’s embrace of the latest technology has to offer has enabled its physicians to serve patients better through increased collaboration and decreased wait time.

**The Future**
OAM uses a solution from NextGen Healthcare Information Systems for its integrated electronic health record and practice management systems, connectivity solutions, and billing services. A major reason OAM chose the NextGen solution is that it’s based on Microsoft SQL Server technology, making integration to Microsoft Dynamics GP uncomplicated. Such integration is planned in the next few months.

For more information about Microsoft Dynamics business solutions and The TM Group, please visit www.tmgroupinc.com or call 888-482-2864.