

An SNB Digital Lockbox automates document workflow at Family MedCenters PA, creating new efficiencies in its business operations and positioning it for growth.



**SNB CASE STUDY:
SNB DIGITAL LOCKBOX**

Family MedCenters PA in south Sedgwick County, Kansas, was receiving about 1,000 pieces of paper through the mail daily in the form of EOBs, checks and other business correspondence. The manual handling, storage and retrieval of these documents was tedious and time-consuming, until Family MedCenters PA began using an SNB Digital Lockbox service to automate this process.

Family MedCenters PA is a healthcare provider with five locations in south Sedgwick County, Kansas. Through nine physicians, two physician assistants, a physical therapy department, a diagnostics department and an ambulatory surgery center, it serves tens of thousands of patients each year. Like many healthcare providers, the back-office and administrative side of its business involves processing a lot of paperwork. On an average day, it receives about 1,000 pieces of paper consisting primarily of EOBs, checks and other business correspondence.

Dealing with this large volume of paperwork was a tedious and time-consuming process for the staff. Prior to 2003, Family MedCenters PA utilized a lockbox from a local bank for deposits. This process would create a batch of paper containing a copy of the checks that was then sent

to the staff at Family MedCenters PA. “We had problems when we received these batches,” says Sonja Fiechtl, manager of accounts receivable for Family MedCenters PA. “There was always a one or two day delay receiving the batch, because it came via mail or courier. Once we received it, we would have to go through the batch and post everything to our computer system. Then, we would take the batch and file it in the basement, because we could only keep

the current week’s batch upstairs for a week before the next one came in.”

Managing this paperwork created a storage and retrieval problem. The most current batch was retained in the office for just one week before it was stored in the basement, nicknamed “the dungeon” by staff. The process of storing documents created inefficiencies for the 13 responsible staff members. “On a daily basis, we would have to go down to the dungeon to

retrieve documents several times,” continues Fiechtl. “Once there, everything was stacked so tight – floor to ceiling – that our staff would have to move a lot of paper just to get to the file we needed. The files were stacked three-deep and three or four across on a shelf. Sometimes we had to use a ladder to get to the right file, and other times we had to get on our hands and knees. There was just no easy way to get to them.”



The automation of Family MedCenter PA’s paper workflow continues to add value. The staff is now working with SNB to integrate the automated handling of its documents directly into its practice management software system, which will further streamline workflow.

Because this process for handling documents was so unwieldy, staff naturally procrastinated when it came to retrieving documentation that was stored in the dungeon. “We didn’t know any better,” states Fiechtl. “We thought this process was as efficient as it could be at the time.” In late 2002, Family MedCenters PA was referred to SNB and learned of its Digital Lockbox service for implementing a paperless office. An SNB Digital Lockbox is a HIPAA



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compliant, cash management service that provides a complete solution for automating the flow of paper associated with receivables, invoices, checks, EOBs and any other documents. The service encompasses mail receipt, same-day check depositing, document scanning, archival, indexing and web-enabled retrieval. It is ideal for healthcare organizations like Family MedCenters PA and other paper-intensive organizations. It is better than manual document handling processes because it speeds up cash flow, provides increased security for handling and storing sensitive documents, and enhances workflow thus increasing the profitability of the organizations that use the service.

After reviewing the SNB Digital Lockbox service, Family MedCenters PA began using it in January 2003. There were no upfront costs for Family MedCenters PA to begin using the SNB Digital Lockbox

service, and no new computer hardware or software required – only an Internet connection was needed. “We looked at the process and the cost, were very impressed with it and thought it was a good deal for us,” states Fietchl. “The service is user friendly and did not require much training time. Our staff is very pleased with it. Now, it is much easier to retrieve, view and print documents because we can do it electronically. The savings and benefits are pretty obvious. Just the costs associated with labor alone made it worth the investment. We have achieved a far more efficient department workflow. Without the SNB Digital Lockbox, we would not be able to function with the 13 people currently on staff. We would have to hire additional staff to get the work done. At the beginning of 2004, we will bring on three additional physicians. I have no concerns about our ability to handle the additional workload this growth will create, because of the process we now have in place with SNB Digital Lockbox services.”

SNB was able to customize the handling of Family MedCenter PA’s mail and documents to precisely meet its needs, which has created new efficiencies in the business operations of the practice. No longer are there delays in receiving documents on any given business day. When Family MedCenter’s mail is received at the SNB Operations Center, it is opened, scanned, stored electronically, and its checks are deposited the same-day. Electronic images of Family MedCenter PA’s documents are immediately available for secure viewing via the Internet, and the originals are batched and couriered to the staff.

“We are now able to post in real-time, because our information is received in a timely fashion,” continues Fietchl. “Furthermore, there is a

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significant timesaving, since we no longer have to retrieve documents from the dungeon, because all of it is online. Also, we don’t spend time filing

documents anymore, because after one month, we can shred the originals.”

The automation of Family MedCenter PA’s paper workflow continues to add value. The staff is now working with SNB to integrate the automated handling of its documents directly into its practice management software system, which will further streamline workflow. The use of the SNB Digital Lockbox service has benefited Family MedCenter PA’s bottom line, and the attitudes of its staff. “Morale in the department has increased,” concludes Fietchl. “People feel empowered when they have the proper tools to perform their jobs.”