DrChrono's Open API and EHR Helped CityHealth Urgent Care Pivot to COVID-19 Testing

About The Practice

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CityHealth is an urgent care clinic based in the San Francisco Bay area and founded by Sean Parkin. Parkin came to urgent care by way of his time spent as an emergency room physician assistant. After feeling stifled by the inefficiencies characteristic of many ER departments, he co-founded his first clinic which he later sold and opened CityHealth shortly thereafter in 2015.

Throughout Parkin's time in healthcare, he's prioritized having a modern practice, which is why he was an early adopter of DrChrono's mobile friendly platform.

"From an EMR standpoint, DrChrono checks a lot of the boxes. We have built our own custom templates, we've taken advantage of the voice-to-text dictation system, the ePrescribing system, the regular ERx for non-controlled substances. Another clinical feature that we find super helpful is being able to take a photo in real time with a patient and upload it to the patient's chart. It makes for really good documentation medically and legally."

Parkin's ability to quickly adopt cutting edge ideas quickly has been essential, particularly during the pandemic. By utilizing a flexible, patient-centered approach, CityHealth has weathered the storm of COVID-19 but not without some roadblocks along the way.

The Challenge

When the danger of COVID-19 became more apparent in March 2020, CityHealth responded swiftly with more thorough disinfecting procedures and other safety measures. However, no amount of plastic barriers and Lysol could bring patients in through the stay-at-home orders and the general avoidance of public spaces. As was the case with many practices, they struggled mightily with a patient volume drought.

The Pivot

Sean Parkin rightly read the situation as something that couldn't be remedied with minor adjustments to practice regulations. With the help of CityHealth's current President and CMO Dennis Ho's technical and strategic wizardry, CityHealth made a full force pivot into COVID testing.

CityHealth was the first practice in California to gain access to rapid COVID testing technology. This allowed for a powerful course correction in patient traffic. However, there were some hiccups during the transition. In the early phases of this pivot, CityHealth was battling up to a 50% patient no show rate. Properly staffing their facilities became a major difficulty as a result of the frequent no shows.

They realized that a more robust system was needed to send out patient reminders and test results in a timely manner, which is where DrChrono's open API became critical:

"Essentially every function you have in the DrChrono API, our two developers are using. The feedback I got from [our developers] is that the DrChrono API is actually quite good compared to other EHR systems."

Through rigorous customer research and creative implementation, Dennis Ho was able to lead the charge on building these systems for CityHealth with the help of the open API. These tools gave CityHealth the operational efficiency it needed to manage the pace of rapid testing appointments at their clinics as well as pop up and partner locations such as the Oakland International Airport.

Moving Forward

"I don't think we're ever going to go back to pre-pandemic normal."

Parkin is certain in the uncertainty that lies ahead. The CityHealth operation is about as battle tested and ready as any practice to roll with the punches. According to Parkin, CityHealth said they will continue doing what they do best: adapting to change as it arises.