



## CASE STUDY - WORKWELL OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE



# DEDICATED CLINICS IN COLORADO USE UL'S SYSTOC® SOFTWARE TO HELP STREAMLINE OPERATIONS AND GROW THE PRACTICE.

WorkWell Occupational Medicine not only weathers northern Colorado winters, it successfully maneuvers around moguls on the slippery slopes frequently encountered in today's challenging business environment. WorkWell operates dedicated clinics in Longmont, Fort Collins, Greeley and Loveland. At a time when many organizations are struggling to regain their footing, the company is adding two additional clinics to its network. WorkWell has 35 employees, including six physicians, two physician assistants, one nurse practitioner and five physical therapists.



### THE CHALLENGE

Stephen Pottenger, CEO and owner, has observed that clinicians and administrators who resist acquiring software to make the leap from paper to paperless systems typically cite two reasons: cost and fear of upheaval. For practice administrators who are trying to overcome these two objections, he suggests tailoring the message to the audience.

*"Either you are going to just be in it for the short term, or you are going to use technology well and ride it into the sunset. That is the choice," he said. "If you are talking with business people, you have to speak the language of improved productivity for your employees, which equates to profit. If you are talking to medical professionals who are not part owners, it is advisable to stress accuracy, positive clinical outcomes and competitive advantages."*

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*"SYSTOC® practice management software produced by UL is the most valuable business management tool WorkWell has at hand."*

Stephen Pottenger,  
CEO and Owner, WorkWell

With academic degrees in healthcare administration and marketing, Pottenger immediately saw a need for software to support process improvements when he first joined WorkWell in 2005. *"They had a paper book with a page for each client and they were using Microsoft® Outlook for scheduling,"* he recalls. *"We needed to create a more efficient system if our organization was going to grow and prosper."*

SYSTOC was selected to provide a solid foundation based on a number of attributes, including its ability to store and attach relevant client protocols.

*"Most of the software available at the time neglected the employer component, which was and still is a primary selling point for us,"* Pottenger said. *"And it was the first product that did not require us to use what we call 'muscling' to make it work."*



## THE SOLUTION

All of the sites use the SYSTOC operating system to ensure consistent clinical quality and service delivery. The uniting force is shared use of electronic medical records (EMR) and universal application of imbedded protocols, policies and procedures.

Pottenger finds the benefits of using state-of-the-art software far exceed installation and training costs. He believes this is especially true in competitive markets in which effective client communication is a critical differentiator.

*"In our world, it is all about quality care and delivering a level of service the clients need,"* Pottenger said. *"There are a lot of ways computerization can help minimize errors and improve efficiency."*

He also is cognizant of the need for an information management platform that streamlines operations and helps the occupational medicine practice function in a cost-conscious manner by adhering to the National Association of Occupational Health Professionals' standards for staffing such as:

- Not allowing total salaries and benefits to exceed 55 percent of net collected revenue;
- Maintaining personnel levels at the 75th percentile of projected patient volumes; and
- Having a ratio no greater than two back office and one-to-two front office staff members per medical provider in a busy clinic.

## RESULTS

*"It's hard for people who aren't numbers-driven to truly understand soft costs or savings associated with efficiency and productivity, which admittedly can be difficult to quantify,"* said Pottenger, a former practice manager and consultant with Concentra, the nation's largest network of urgent care-occupational health centers. *"But we know we are billing hundreds of thousands of dollars each month with only 1.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. We also know that even with high patient volumes and multiple providers at each location that we only have a staffing ratio of 2.25 FTEs of administrative support for each full time medical provider."*

*"That would be impossible if we did not have an EMR to tie it all together. Without that tool, I estimate our ability to see that kind of volume would mandate another 30 to 50 percent in staffing costs just to manage data input and output."*

Pottenger believes WorkWell makes exceptionally good use of SYSTOC's extensive capabilities, in part because senior management acts as a "champion" and continuously supports training.

*"You have to jump in with both feet,"* he said. For example, while establishing reasonable deadlines to phase out paper charts and protocols and phase in paperless functions by department, the practice did not allow staff to go outside SYSTOC for solutions.

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