

## ENSEMBLE SUCCESS STORY: Medical Faculty Associates of George Washington University

# Physician Portal Opens a Window on Better Healthcare Delivery and Profitability

Rapid development with InterSystems Ensemble delivers solution in just over 30 days

Today's medical practices are jammed with paper, and the amount of time stolen by paperwork and record keeping has affected the physician/patient relationship. Medical Faculty Associates (MFA) of George Washington University in Washington, DC, is using InterSystems Ensemble in a plan to counter the paper onslaught and restore a sense of control to physicians and administrators. MFA serves more than 1,500 patients per day with 275 physicians, more than 130 residents, and 700 support staff.

### Innovating for success

In 2004, MFA completed deployment of an electronic medical record (EMR) system, and providers have leveraged the system to improve patient care and make their own lives less stressful. With this success, MFA management and physicians began to ask if equivalent access to up-to-date financial and other operational data could improve physician time and budget management, and business performance. The existing monthly reports provided good data, but not in time for physicians and administrators to act on it toward meeting that month's goals. With strong support from the practice's board of directors, executive management, and its physicians, MFA took the next step in its technology vision.

Using the InterSystems Ensemble universal integration platform, MFA created a browser-based portal that draws live data from 9 separate sources, including MS Excel and applications based on Caché, Oracle, and Microsoft SQL Server databases.



*"We wanted to develop and deploy a dashboard solution in thirty days. All the data was there already, so why not? We just needed a product powerful enough and easy enough to use to make it possible, and that was Ensemble."*

*Praveen Toteja, (Bottom right)  
CIO, Medical Faculty Associates*

The portal presents a consolidated view of the information using Ensemble's built-in business activity monitoring and dashboard capabilities. In a little over thirty days MFA completed the portal and rolled it out to a trial group of twenty-five users, and then to the entire practice.

Physicians and administrators now monitor up-to-date consolidated information on the practice, departmental, and individual levels. Comparing key performance indicators to established goals, users can drill-down into the consolidated information to look at details and make immediate adjustments in their day-to-day work. Physicians gain scheduling flexibility by knowing whether they are on target against goals, and can choose, for example, to increase or decrease clinical hours, or spend more or less time on research. With the information provided through Ensemble, the staff feels more in control, and job satisfaction has increased.

Although not a definitive means of measuring the impact of the physician dashboard on the practice, the year-over-year improvement in booked appointments and charges has been profound. Since the dashboard rollout, all departments have met their monthly budgets. And charges for the most recent month in 2005, compared to the same month in 2004, were up \$466,000. For the most recent two months in 2005, compared to the same months in 2004, charges were up \$1,400,000. It appears that physicians and administrators are using the dashboard information as intended.

### **A healthy future for medical information technology**

The EMR and Ensemble dashboard technology have had a benefit outside the practice as well as inside. New patients at MFA report being drawn to the practice because of its use of technology, and feel that they are receiving better medical care. New doctors and residents are drawn to MFA in part because they do not want to deal with all the paperwork typical in other practices.

Going forward, MFA will enhance the physician portal's business activity monitoring features, starting with Ensemble's paging capability. The portal currently connects to the EMR and, among other metrics, tracks pending tasks against resolution for each physician. The EMR, however, has no way to notify physicians about urgent tasks, such as an out of range value on a lab test, if the physician is not online – for example, when traveling. When a task is flagged as urgent, MFA will use Ensemble to send a message to the physician's PDA or pager so that it can be addressed immediately.

*“Technology was not something everyone wanted to jump in to. There was resistance. But today not a single physician in the practice regrets it. Everyone is on board.”*

*Praveen Toteja*

Medical practices often are slow to adopt technology. But at MFA the easy-to-use and highly functional physician portal, powered by Ensemble, has been adopted and embraced with passion.

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