



Tarzana Treatment Centers

- 475 beds
- Los Angeles County



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Challenge:

Paper-based patient records creating:

- ▶ Clinician chart access & workflow issues
- ▶ Record management & storage inefficiencies
- ▶ Record security concerns
- ▶ Regulation compliance concerns
- ▶ Slow response times to insurer inquiries

Solution:

eWebHealth Suite:

- ▶ eWebView™
- ▶ eWebCompletion™
- ▶ eWebSignature™
- ▶ ChartVault®

Results:

- ▶ Administrative time reduced for clinicians
- ▶ Elimination of chart access issues
- ▶ Simultaneous, secure record access achieved
- ▶ Dramatic increase in record security
- ▶ Increased HIM staff productivity

Tarzana Treatment Centers Uses eWebHealth Technology to Improve Patient Care, Maintain Regulatory Compliance and Increase Efficiency

Since 1972, Tarzana Treatment Centers has provided high quality, affordable behavioral healthcare and treatment services in Los Angeles County at seven locations. Tarzana delivers a continuum of integrated alcohol and drug addiction prevention, treatment, education, mental health, medical detox and residential rehab for teens/youth, adults and families. The facilities also provide outpatient services, sober-living housing, aftercare, HIV/AIDS services, family medical care, women's services, family counseling, domestic violence intervention, anger management and community education services. Tarzana operates with 60 beds for detoxification services and 295 beds for residential alcohol and drug treatment — a total of 355 beds. Tarzana's 20 sober living/transitional housing facilities in the San Fernando Valley, Long Beach and Antelope Valley provide an additional 120 beds. Tarzana sees, on average, more than 15,000 patients annually.

Picking Up Where the Clinical EHR Leaves Off

As patient volume has grown at Tarzana, so has its volume of medical records, making efficient record management a growing concern — especially the process of chart completion. Although it had a clinical electronic health record (EHR) system in place which provides a complete clinical profile of its patients, the organization still had patient records housed in paper form.

“It was time for a change,” said Jim Sorg, Ph.D., Director of Information Technology at Tarzana Treatment Centers. “Our medical records were spread over an 80 mile distance and we were physically transporting paper back and forth daily. In the event of an audit, if the records requested were not on-site, this became quite a time-consuming process.”

This growing problem led Tarzana to explore, and ultimately to implement, a legal EHR system to protect and enhance authorized record access, thereby streamlining and speeding up the chart completion process as Tarzana continued to replace

its paper records. “I was looking for a solution that would reduce the productivity-draining work involved in having staff correct charts. Our policy requires that staff turn charts into HIM within 72 hours post discharge. This short turnaround time often resulted in incomplete charts. Anyone with an incomplete chart had to physically go to the HIM department and complete their work in-person,” Sorg recalled.

Tarzana needed a system with well-defined workflows that could be tailored to the needs of a behavioral healthcare facility. “We wanted a system that was easy for our clinicians to use and could be accessed remotely by the many different individuals involved in providing care to our patients,” explained Sorg. “Our work is heavily multi-disciplinary, unlike hospitals where only one doctor and one nurse may be involved; here we have psychiatrists, other physicians, psychologists, social workers, counselors, nutritionists, and technicians who may all need authorized access to the same patient record at the same time.”

“We needed a solution that would help us monitor our compliance to state and Medicare regulations,” said Albert Senella, Chief Operating Officer at Tarzana Treatment Centers. “We need to assure that we consistently meet the strict accreditation and licensing standards, such as Title 22 for the California Department of Health, as well as Joint Commission, CMS, and the State Department of Mental Health.”

Finding the Perfect Fit for a Behavioral Health Organization

After reviewing several systems, Sorg discovered eWebHealth technology. “eWebHealth had what we were looking for. The biggest differentiator we found with eWebHealth is its ability to carefully redesign our workflow to maximize efficiency, eliminating all of the wasted time we were spending and instead focusing on careful, thoughtful design of how to do our work well.”

“The eWebHealth SaaS solution offers a justifiable pricing model and provides a high level of security — it’s web-based, so there’s no hardware investment needed. And because it’s web-based, that means our clinicians and other caregivers don’t need to come to the office to do things like chart completion or chart signatures. They can do it all online, and it’s HIPAA compliant.”

Another concern compelling Tarzana to seek an innovative answer to its record management issues was the fact that their organization is supported by public funds, as well as income from its private insurance business line that addresses the needs of members of private insurance companies. The ability to respond quickly to the information needs of both sectors demanded an efficient approach to medical record management and storage.

Tarzana purchased the following eWebHealth applications:

- ▶ **eWebCompletion** – designed to eliminate the need for separate deficiency management and chart tracking applications and enabling chart access as soon as the chart is completed
- ▶ **eWebSignature** – designed to ensure faster chart completion rates and reduce administrative hassle for clinicians
- ▶ **eWebView** – designed to improve cash flow, reduce department costs, and increase staff productivity by assigning role-based activity to specific charts

The total implementation process took eight months to complete. Approximately 500 people use the system at seven clinic sites across Los Angeles County for both back office and clinical access to patient information. Tarzana has been using the applications since October 2007. “eWebHealth continues to provide us with solid customer support that offers flexible hours and is responsive to all our needs,” notes Sorg.



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Director of Information Technology

The Clinical Impact: Improving Efficiencies that Affect Patient Care

Dr. Monica Weil, a psychologist and manager at Tarzana, appreciates the benefits this new system has brought to Tarzana’s clinicians. “eWebHealth has facilitated my ability as a clinician and manager to review clinical records of closed charts in order to satisfy Joint Commission requirements and my contractual compliance. It enables me to multi-task and review charts in a time-efficient manner,” explains Weil. The entire clinical staff has now embraced using the system.

eWebHealth’s expert staff provided the training for all clinical and administrative users of the system. Time and again, eWebHealth finds that because the workflow definitions and screen design are so similar to actual charts, the training experience is simple. This attention to design has helped many adapt to an electronic environment more easily.

Using eWebHealth, Tarzana’s clinicians and administrators found that the overall level of security surrounding a patient’s chart was so greatly improved that patient care has been enhanced and HIPAA compliance has been met with increasing confidence. “In California today there is a crackdown on inappropriate review of medical records. As both our clinical EHR system and the eWebHealth legal EHR system have extensive audit trails, employees are well aware that their work is being monitored, and this technology helps us avoid situations in which a patient’s privacy is breached,” said Senella.

“We are truly able to ensure that only those who are authorized to view the chart have access to it which is such a crucial thing for us as a behavioral healthcare facility. Unlike paper charts, the right automation tool achieves this important aspect to patient care, not only for extreme cases, but in providing daily care in a better way.” eWebHealth enables easier reading of medical documents, which therefore ensures a faster response time. Using the eWebView application in particular, Sorg finds that the ability to have timely retrieval of patient information has had a real impact on the hospital’s ability to provide care. “Many of our patients come to us in a critical situation,” Sorg states. “Because addiction and mental illness are chronic diseases, we see patients over a period of years for multiple episodes, and each episode may require different types of care. Odds are, if you look up a patient chart once, you’re going to have to look it up again. Having the right information at your fingertips can really make all the difference in how we deliver care.”

The Regulatory Impact: Ensuring Compliance with Both State and Federal Regulations

Tarzana Treatment Center CEO Scott Taylor noted that the original intent for the purchase of the eWebHealth system was to have a better means for storage and retrieval of medical records information, but he was even more pleased to discover that the eWebHealth system was also a real benefit for helping him manage the Center's compliance and risk management activities.

"Like most 24/7 facilities we have clinicians who are not on-site full time, so giving them the ability to use electronic completion and signature for patient charts dramatically improves our compliance," said Taylor. "Due to the sensitive nature of the care we provide we must always document thoroughly and completely, so that we can be sure that our patients are receiving the best, most thorough care available."

All healthcare facilities must meet federal and state regulations and are constantly looking for ways to mitigate potential risks. The stakes are even higher with behavioral health facilities, as the population they serve can be comprised of a more volatile case mix, and there is a greater propensity for a patient's condition to cause harm to themselves and/or those around them if care is not properly administered and the proper evaluation made. Routinely presented with critical and acute behavioral health situations, treatment methods may need to be used for proper restraint or seclusion, and these methods can come under question or scrutiny from time to time.

"There are times when we may need to address a complaint or inquiry, and part of that process may be to review the patient record, to look up the patient's clinical indicators to see if there is medical justification for the care that was administered, or to review the patient's episodic trends for dangerous or destructive behavior, so that we can assess the situation and ensure that we're meeting acceptable standards under the regulations we must follow. By having the record securely stored but easily accessible by authorized personnel, we have the complete, most up-to-date patient record at our fingertips and can review these matters more quickly," says Dr. Ken Bachrach, Ph.D., Clinical Director at Tarzana Treatment Centers.

Having a web-based system means having more flexibility for the demanding schedules of hospital administrators and clinicians. "I am no longer dependent on the hours that our medical records department keeps in order to access the records I need for these reviews," remarks Dr. Bachrach. "This helps us provide better service to our patients and their families."

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Clinical Director

Real Results

The use of the eWebHealth solution has brought numerous benefits to the medical records department. Tarzana employees have been enthusiastic about the new legal EHR technology and the labor savings it has brought to the organization. Dr. Bachrach noted, “eWebHealth saves considerable time and energy in the review of medical records of discharged patients. Staff can access and review these records at any Tarzana site rather than having to request the records be sent from a central location. This results in a faster turn around time in the review, and allows multiple individuals to review the same record at the same time.”

Clinical staff can easily look up critical medical information in a patient’s chart at any time, from anywhere, without chasing down the record from another department or location. With a few key strokes, the HIM department can notify clinicians of their various chart deficiencies; in turn, the clinicians can complete their work — including signing charts — from wherever they have internet access.

“eWebHealth allows staff at any site to review medical records from their office or from their treatment program. This can be particularly helpful when a patient moves from one level of care to another, and the staff member wants to review medical information that is not available in the AVATAR clinical electronic health record system,” noted Dr. Bachrach.

Further adding to Tarzana’s efficiency is the fact that HIM staff no longer have to track chart deficiencies. If a physician signs only two of the three charts on his or her electronic work list, for example, the incomplete chart will stay on the work list until the work is completed, without a HIM staff member

needing to intervene or even be aware of what has been done and what has not. When necessary, however, HIM staff can run chart deficiency reports by provider or location to increase the accountability of those responsible for completing patient charts. “Our medical records department used to be a crazy place, with a lot of people coming and going throughout the day,” said Sorg. “Now it is an organized, peaceful workspace that has allowed staff to increase their productivity exponentially.”

“eWebHealth is becoming useful for quality improvement activities as well. Senior clinical staff can review records and point out training issues and needs, which can be reviewed and addressed by having the same record available to the program and individual staff members,” said Senella.

There is also electronic access to patient charts for business functions. When documentation is required for reimbursement or other purposes, employees have quick access to the information. Along with making charts more accessible, the technology enables Tarzana to maintain much tighter control over who views patient records and which parts of records are seen — important capabilities when it comes to protecting the confidentiality of patient information.

Employees have different levels of access to charts, depending on their responsibilities ensuring that all confidentiality restrictions are followed. A robust auditing feature in eWebHealth technology enables authorized employees to track who has viewed a patient record, a deterrent to employees who may be tempted to overstep their access rights. Because Tarzana sometimes cares for high profile patients as well as its own employees, the ability of eWebHealth to lock down records is extremely important.