



SETMA: MAY, 1999 - FOUR SEMINAL EVENTS

Without doubt, in 1995, the first step in forming what is now SETMA was the adoption of a team approach to patient care. That focus will be the central part of the story when the history of SETMA is written. The second critical decision was adoption of the electronic medical record (EMR) system. But, May, 1999 will always be central to our history as in the first week of that month four seminal events took place.

First, SETMA's CEO announced that the EHR was too hard and too expensive if all we gained was the ability to document a patient encounter electronically. We concluded EHR was only "worth it," if we leveraged electronics to improve care for each patient; to eliminate errors which were dangerous to the health of our patients; and, if we could develop electronic functionalities for improving the health and the care of our patients and of population groups. This was our transition from EMR to electronic patient management (EPM).

The second event was that from Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline*, we defined the principles which guided our development of an EHR and which defined the steps of SETMA's transformation from an EMR to EPM (<http://www.setma.com/EPM-Tools/pdfs/designing-an-emr.pdf>). These principles would also be the foundation of SETMA's morphing into a patient-centered medical home (PC-MH). The principles were to:

1. Pursue Electronic Patient Management rather than Electronic Patient Records
2. Bring to every patient encounter what is known, not what a particular provider knows
3. Make it easier to do "it" right than not to do it at all
4. Continually challenge providers to improve their performance
5. Infuse new knowledge and decision-making tools throughout an organization instantly
6. Promote continuity of care with patient education, information and plans of care
7. Enlist patients as partners and collaborators in their own health improvement
8. Evaluate the care of patients and populations of patients longitudinally
9. Audit provider performance based on endorsed quality measurement sets
10. Integrate electronic tools in an intuitive fashion giving patients the benefit of expert knowledge about specific conditions

In 2009, we would discover that these principles are essentially those of Patient-Centered Medical Home.

The third seminal event was the preparation of a philosophical base for our future; written in May, 1999 and published in booklet form in October, 1999, this blueprint was entitled, "More Than a Transcription Service: Revolutionizing the Practice of Medicine With Electronic Health Records which Evolves into Electronic Patient Management". This booklet became our declaration that we were going to succeed at any cost and with any effort.

The fourth seminal event was that we determined to adopt a celebratory attitude toward our progress in EMR. In May, 1999, my cofounding partner was lamenting that we were not crawling yet with our use of the EMR. I agreed and asked him, "When your son first turned over in bed, did you lament that he could not walk, or did you celebrate this first milestone of muscular coordination of turning over in bed?" He smiled and I said, "We may not be crawling yet, but we have begun. If in a year, we are doing only what we are currently doing, I will join your lamentation, but today I am celebrating that we have begun." SETMA's celebratory spirit has allowed us to focus on the future through many lamentable circumstances and has allowed us to press forward through many disappointments. Focusing on our successes kept us moving forward and the cumulative effect was always success.