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Special Technology Feature



MEDICALPRACTICE
TECHNOLOGIES
PROVEN SOLUTIONS AND SUPPORT FOR PHYSICIANS

Keeping Busy Physicians' Practices Running Smoothly

Medical Practice Technologies' team of experts: (L to R) Mary Nix, Vice President; David Stinson, Medical Systems Specialist; Tanya White, Senior Medical Systems Specialist; C.A. Nix, President. Photographed at Medical Practice Technologies in Cumming.

Keeping Busy Physicians' Practices Running Smoothly

Medical Practice Technologies Offers Proven Hardware Solutions and Support

By Helen K. Kelley

Have you ever wished for an IT specialist that could provide a more reliable computer system with less down time? How about one that could save you money and would be available at *your* convenience? And wouldn't it be perfect if this company specialized in hardware solutions for medical practices?

Wish no more. Medical Practice Technologies offers proven system solutions and support for physicians, either on an hourly basis or by contractual agreement. Whether the client is a solo practitioner with a staff of five, or a multi-physician practice with 80-plus employees, Medical Practice Technologies gives each one the same expert and dedicated attention that keeps their computer systems running reliably.

"What sets us apart from other systems support companies is that we're medical-specific," notes C.A. Nix, III, President of Medical Practice Technologies (MPT). "Most technology specialists that install and support computer systems don't really grasp the unique needs and requirements of physicians. However, we *do* understand those needs and have the knowledge and expertise required to keep our clients' systems running smoothly."

MPT also makes it a priority to cultivate personal, one-on-one relationships with each of its clients. Clients know that when they place a call for support to MPT, they will receive a courteous, fast response from a support staff they can trust.

PROVIDING SOLUTIONS AND SUPPORT—ANY TIME

MPT offers turnkey solutions—from consultation to implementation—that cover what the client needs, whether that means installing a brand new system or taking over support and upgrading an existing system. Support is offered on an hourly basis or through the company's annual-fee Practice System Support Agreement (PSSA).

"Most medical practices are used to the idea of paying an annual fee for their billing and scheduling software (practice management software) and the electronic medical records (EMR) software. They pay an annual fee to get unlimited updates and support," explains Nix. "We provide that kind of service on a technical level for the customer's system hardware, and we offer unparalleled access—our PSSA customers can call us any time, day or night,

for repair issues."

For an annual fee, the PSSA offers a variety of built-in services, including twice-a-month preventive maintenance. The maintenance is done via remote access during hours that won't disrupt the client's workday, and includes services such as verifying that the client's virus protection software is up-to-date and working, and that tape backups are functioning. The client's software is configured so that if there is a failure of any kind, the system automatically notifies MPT's support group by email of the problem. This proactive preventive maintenance helps to ensure that the client's computer system runs more efficiently and experiences fewer problems.

With its remote access capabilities, MPT's support group is able to serve clients around the country, from Georgia to California. MPT has an agreement with Dell Computers as a premier healthcare solutions provider—the company purchases pre-configured systems from Dell, which are first tested by MPT's support group before shipping them out to customers. MPT is able to connect to the client's system remotely to finish its configuration and have it up-and-running quickly and ready for employee training. MPT is also able to fix most hardware problems remotely, but if that's not possible, a representative from Dell will be dispatched to the customer's office

Whether it means installing a brand new system or taking over support and upgrading an existing one, Medical Practice Technologies offers turnkey solutions — from consultation to implementation — removing the burden from physicians and practice administrators.



PHOTO BY LELAND HOLDER

What Clients Have to Say About Medical Practice Technologies

"In August of 2003, we began our Electronic Medical Data conversion and our association with C.A. Nix of Medical Practice Technologies. C.A. met with our management and carefully laid out and staged all of the state-of-the-art hardware and its implementation, while working with our software vendor. He has assembled a top-notch team of professionals who are not only well trained, but also acutely responsive to their clients' needs. Our practice of nine pediatricians and three nurse practitioners feel less burdened without charts, and management is certain we are capturing charges and coding more correctly. This August, we are expanding our offices and will call on Medical Practice Technologies to recommend and install equipment again. We look forward to turning this project over to them, and we are confident of the outcome."

—Ginger Henry
Office Manager
Snellville Pediatrics

"Medical Practice Technologies has been very helpful in bringing system problems to a quick resolution. They are always accessible and are willing to do whatever it takes to fix the problem, even if it means coming on-site. We are extremely satisfied with their service."

—Sean T. Hindsman
Business Office Manager
Castillo-Walters OB/GYN

"We've experienced only minor problems with our computer system, such as inability to access the Internet. But C.A. Nix and the staff at Medical Practice Technologies are always quick to respond to our call and repair the problem. They are some of the best IT people I've ever worked with."

—Sam Song, M.D.
G.C. Duluth Pediatrics

"As a user of an EMR and an electronic practice management program, I know how valuable these programs can be. However, while we come to rely on the constant availability of our information, we also become more vulnerable to disruptions in our workflow when a hardware or software problem arises. For several years, I have relied on Medical Practice Technologies to maintain and upgrade my network. I have been more than pleased with their service. Medical Practice Technologies makes a point of preventing nightmares before they occur. In the past four years, my network and server have been down less than 24 hours—total! We have had no difficulties with cantankerous equipment or finicky software because MPT keeps on top of our network status and all the changes that occur."

—Jeffrey D. Cooper, M.D.
Cooper Pediatrics

to make the repair at no extra charge.

In addition to installing new systems, MPT also offers support for clients' existing computer systems. "We'll come in and take over their existing hardware, and bring it to what we call a 'supportable level,'" says Nix. "That usually means replacing some hardware or upgrading virus protection software or a backup system to bring it to a level that we are able to service through an agreement."

MPT clients need not worry when a piece of hardware goes bad. One of the options offered in the service agreement allows for prepaid, overnight shipping of spares for critical components. The client receives an equivalent part overnight that's pre-configured for their office, keeping downtime to a minimum.

MPT's employees have several years of combined experience in devel-



PHOTO BY LELAND HOLDER

Close-up of a Fujitsu Wireless Handheld that enables doctors to enter patient data remotely to the server.

oping and providing hardware support for the specific software products that physicians' offices use, including—but not limited to—well-known packages such as JMJ Technologies' EncounterPro, G.E. Medical System's Centricity, and Fox Meadows' Encounter Manager. MPT has already established close relationships with JMJ, HealthSystems—G.E. Centricity's local provider—and Fox Meadows, and is continuously forming relationships with additional medical software companies in order to provide the most comprehensive service possible to its clients.

"While we do not sell or support any medical software packages directly, we do work closely with the manufacturers to provide the best system solutions for our clients. You will never hear us say, 'It's not our problem. Call your software company.' We'll work directly with the software provider to find a solution to the problem, if necessary," says Nix. "Our goal is to take as much of the support burden off the shoulders of the physicians and practice administrators as possible."

INCREASED EFFICIENCY, COST SAVINGS

Any hardware system comes with a cost of ownership, and maintenance can be expensive over time. MPT's PSSA contracts provide peace of mind at a reasonable cost.

"Even the highest-priced PSSA averages out to less than \$100 week

over the course of a year, which is a good investment when it comes to protecting your patient records and other business data,” notes Nix. “The cost is actually much less than if you hired even a part-time IT employee. And you’re guaranteeing you’re getting technicians who specialize in medical practices.”

Additional savings can result from MPT’s use of “thin client technology,” a concept that reduces the need to buy a traditional PC for each exam room. Instead, thin client terminals—which run off a main server and Windows technology and are only used for data entry—can be substituted in most of the exam rooms. Many times, older PCs that the client already has on-site can be used as thin client terminals, thereby increasing their life-span and usefulness for several additional years. The results of using thin client technology are low maintenance costs and extended hardware life.

MPT also installs wireless technology that can result in enormous savings over traditional computer terminals, especially for physician practices that are utilizing EMR software. These wireless notebook computers—which weigh less than five pounds and can be carried from room to room by physicians and nurses—actually run off a main server. They have an average battery life of seven to nine hours, and cost about \$1,500—quite a bit less than standard laptop computers. In addition, a practice can save on software licensing fees by using the wireless, portable computers instead of having a terminal in each exam room. For example, a medical practice with 11 exam rooms, each with a separate computer terminal, would pay 11 licensing fees for its software. The same practice, using three wireless devices that could move from room to room, would only pay three licensing fees.

Nix encourages his clients to think about priorities, such as cost, personal interaction with patients, and reliability before choosing a computer system.

“I do tell clients that if system reliability is crucial and they can afford it, it’s preferable to have separate terminals in the exam rooms. Wireless technology can sometimes experience third-party interference and battery life issues,” he explains. “On the other hand, wireless notebooks are less expensive and portable. Many doctors also prefer to face their patients in the exam room, and the small notebooks allow the physician to hold the device and enter information while talking to the patient face to face.”

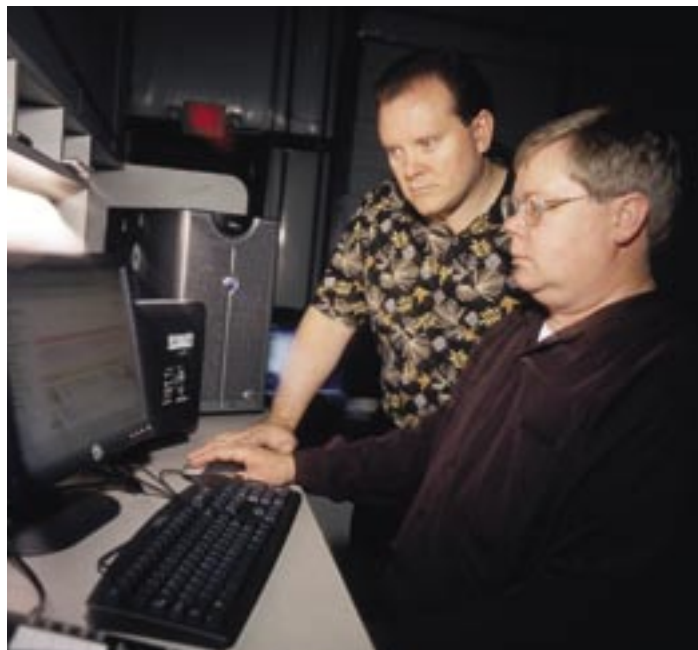
The Medical Practice Technologies team consists of:

C.A. Nix, III
President

Mary A. Nix
Vice President/Accounting

Tanya L. White
Senior Medical Systems Specialist

David L. Stinson
Medical Systems Specialist



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In the future, Nix feels that the wireless technology and other hardware will continue to improve while costs stay relatively the same, or even decline. Speedier operation, larger capacity and longer battery life are all on the horizon for both standard and laptop computers, as well as servers.

A LONG-RANGE PLAN

Another hallmark of Medical Practice Technologies is its long-range planning for clients’ needs. Every MPT system is built to last a minimum of three to five years and to accommodate changes a medical practice might experience over that time, including expansion or moving to a new location.

And, while there is a substantial initial investment in a new or upgraded computer system or service agreement, MPT clients can be assured that they will experience increased reliability and reduced maintenance costs over the life of the system.

“Of course, our goal is to sell our clients ongoing services, but we won’t sell a system that’s unreliable and will likely last only a couple of years. Nor will we install a system and not explain to the client how to use it so that they have to rely on us unnecessarily,” says Nix. “In fact, we’ve even been told on occasion that our systems are ‘over-spec’d’ in the beginning. But it’s because we’ve planned for our client’s future.”

To learn more about Medical Practice Technologies, their proven solutions and support for physicians, and how they can help you achieve greater operating efficiency and fewer hardware hassles, call (678) 455-7191 or visit online at www.medpractech.com. ■

