

Mobile Pulmonary Function Testing Program Takes Sophisticated Assessment into Patients' Homes



ndd's EasyOne Pro® Brings American Respiratory Labs into the Black

Industry: Mobile PFT Testing

Solution: EasyOne Pro®

Challenges

- Medicare reimbursement cuts
- Limited capital to buy equipment
- Busy, on-the-go testing business
- Need for accurate results
- Technicians require lightweight equipment to carry up to patients living in multi-floor walk-ups

Solutions

- Substantial reimbursement provides new income stream
- Lease option
- DLCO testing → quick ROI
- No service required
- No warm up time
- No altitude or other adjustments
- Mobile PFT Testing
- Accurate ultrasound technology
- Automatic calibration

The Challenges

Several years ago, long-time pulmonary function technician Robin Contino decided it was time to go out on her own, so she started American Respiratory Labs, a diagnostics – based enterprise that today performs mobile pulmonary function testing in patients' homes. She and her technicians work in counties throughout northern and southern California. Their clients are Durable Medical Equipment (DME) providers who bundle American Respiratory Lab's testing into their own supplemental oxygen services.

When the business began, American Respiratory Labs did a variety of respiratory assessments required by Medicare, including blood oxygen saturation tests to qualify people for supplemental oxygen as well as capnography the measurement of exhaled carbon dioxide used to prevent respiratory failure in patients taking pain medications. But as round after round of Medicare reimbursement cuts threatened the viability of Contino's business, she began looking for additional sources of revenue.

DLCO is known to be the most powerful COPD survival predictive test.

"We were faced with either closing our doors or finding something else to do—something that would be beneficial to patients as well as profitable" says Contino. "Every respiratory patient should have a baseline DLCO. It's like knowing your weight. Even if you don't currently have COPD or lung cancer or interstitial disease, a baseline DLCO enables your clinician to track lung function and quickly react if something goes wrong. And for patients with active disease state, it's a good way to track whether it's progressing or regressing."

Because American Respiratory Labs serves such a wide geographical area, a standalone lab wasn't feasible, so Contino began looking for a portable PFT solution.

The Solutions

Contino was impressed with the EasyOne Pro, a compact, portable PFT device made by spirometry market leader n d d Medical Technologies that performs DLCO testing, spirometry and full lung volumes anywhere in 20 minutes. Because Contino and her technicians visit multiple homes each day – many of their San Francisco clients live in third- and fourth-floor walkups— they needed a device that was light, compact, and durable. EasyOne Pro, which measures 12-square-inches, fit the bill. n d d's lease option was an important factor in Contino's decision-making as well.



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Another important factor in ARL’s choice of the EasyOne Pro was that the accurate, reliable ultrasound technology also eliminates complex calibration and maintenance, important features for an on-the-go business like American Respiratory Labs. Also the device is ready to measure as soon as it is turned on.

Software enables ARL to automatically input all PFT results directly into a patient’s electronic health record.

The Results

In just four months since leasing EasyOne Pro, American Respiratory Labs has performed approximately 250 DLCO tests at a profit of between \$100.00-\$150.00 per patient. “Patients are surprised and impressed at the sophistication of our device and that we can do such comprehensive pulmonary function testing in their homes,” reports Contino. “For some of them they’re not mobile and it’s an ordeal to get transportation to a PFT testing site. For others, they’re unable to afford transportation. They are so happy and appreciative that we come to their homes. The single breath DLCO is not a difficult test for patients to perform and it provides clinicians with invaluable information that American Respiratory Labs inputs directly into patients’ electronic medical records, according to Contino. Her DME clients like the fact that they can tout her services as an added value to their physician customers. Contino has been so impressed with EasyOne Pro and its impact on her business that she’s now looking to broaden her business in Southern California (where she currently uses the EasyOne spirometer). Longer term, she’s considering expanding into Arizona, where she quips, “Everyone who has lung problems in California moves there.”

Medicare’s habitual cost-cutting requires American Respiratory Labs to be nimble, continually searching for ways to remain profitable while providing needed services to patients, according to Contino. ndd’s EasyOne Pro is an important solution to that challenge.

“I would absolutely recommend EasyOne Pro to colleagues,” says Contino, who previously worked at several hospitals. “It’s a great little machine for businesses like ours as well as for outpatient clinics and hospitals because of its portability. It’s very convenient because you can take it to the patient’s bedside.”

About ndd Medical Technologies

With a 40 percent share of the U.S. spirometry market, ndd Medical Technologies offers innovative, easy-to-use pulmonary function testing instruments that help clinicians diagnose and treat lung disease with greater precision. Its EasyOne® portable instruments take lung testing wherever it is needed, measuring DLCO, FRC, LCI and FVC. ndd’s patented Ultrasonic TrueFlow™ technology eliminates problems associated with traditional methods of flow measurement, making tests reliable and error-free. To learn more, visit www.nddmed.com.