With more and more individuals entering the Medicare and Medicaid systems, agencies cannot afford to ignore available efficiencies.

Streamlining Billing With ContinuLink Healthcare Platform

Medicaid billing can be a complex and tedious process, laden with layer upon layer of issues related to compliance, documentation and accounting. As a home healthcare agency processes more and more claims, issues such as data entry errors and reduced time to audit charts against associated claims impede the QA process.

Even worse, many Medicaid and waiver programs require agencies to use special data entry forms or to use direct data entry to file claims. So as agencies grow, they require an ever-increasing staff to manage these issues. And with profit margins already low, having to add staff can be disastrous for many agencies.
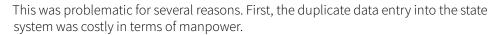
The Challenge

Interim HealthCare of Colorado (IHC) came to Complia Health to provide a solution for their Medicaid service issues across their five offices. As with most Medicaid providers, IHC was dealing with the typical problems of direct data entry, delayed payments for services and overlooked processes, which led to write offs. As the IHC offices began to take on more Medicaid clients, administrators found that a disproportionate amount of time was being spent on Medicaid billing.

Devin Ringling, CEO of the Colorado Front Range franchise of IHC, and Elizabeth Reul, COO of the Ringling Organization, were able to use Complia Health's ContinuLink healthcare platform to increase efficiency and, in turn, their overall bottom line – equating to millions of dollars in additional revenue.

When Complia Health started working with IHC, its Medicaid billing process was consuming an inordinate amount of resources. IHC billing clerks were doing direct data entry to the payer's system, which sometimes resulted in human errors. The data entry was also redundant as the data was first written to paper, which was very costly in staff hours. IHC staff would generate an invoice and then take it to another computer where it had to be entered by hand into the state system. In fact, IHC had three full-time employees whose sole job was entering invoices into the Colorado Medicaid system.

This was problematic for several reasons. First, the duplicate data entry into the state system was costly in terms of manpower.

Second, data entry errors were causing anomalies in authorizations. Miskeyed claims could easily cause authorized hours to disappear and go unnoticed for months, at which point the cost to fix the problem exceeded the value – resulting in write-offs.

Another issue IHC faced was ensuring prior authorizations were received before services were delivered, a common problem for Medicaid providers. Agencies that rely on Medicaid funding know that if they don't receive prior authorization for a service, they may not get reimbursed for it. Unfortunately, it's common for agencies to not realize that they are lacking prior authorization or a specific order form before it is too late and services have already been performed.

For IHC, this translated to an annual write-off of $50,000 to $200,000 a year in unrecoverable Medicaid funds. It was not unusual to have the Medicaid system say that since it did not have all of the necessary paperwork, IHC would not be paid for services that had already been rendered.

Ringling said that for one client alone, his agency could be providing private duty nursing services for 20 hours a day, seven days a week. In Colorado, an agency can only bill Medicaid once a month – so IHC could be 30 days into working with this client with a bill of $50,000 to$60,000 – only to realize that they didn't have all of the authorization and paperwork they needed to get paid. This, unfortunately, happened to IHC more than once. Other payments came into question when important client data was lost, overlooked or simply forgotten.

The Solution

 After an exhaustive analysis of the available software solutions, IHC determined that Complia Health's ContinuLink – could actually meet its needs. ContinuLink offered the only product on the market that could manage IHC's diverse payer mix. Its ability to seamlessly manage Medicare, Medicaid, waiver programs, commercial insurance, private duty and staffing put ContinuLink in a class of its own. ContinuLink's model was also designed to manage multiple locations or business units separately, with the ability to roll up data to IHC's parent operating unit.

Working with Ringling and Reul, Complia Health implemented the solution throughout IHC's business units, including home care, staffing, non-medical and hospice. Complia Health built a fully integrated cloud model for IHC that reengineered and simplified virtually all of their Medicaid processes.

The Result

Just one year after implementing Complia Health's ContinuLink, IHC grew revenues from $16.5M to $20M, without adding a single person to the billing or payroll departments. The savings they realized allowed them to grow their business by increasing their bottom line. "Now, 90 percent of my business from three of my locations is being entered once into ContinuLink, which then generates an electronic file onto the state system. I appreciate that the people at ContinuLink are very knowledgeable about how state systems work so they were able to write a link that allows us to upload data directly into the state system," said Ringling.

Today, years after starting to use Complia Health's ContinuLink, IHC has grown to a $29M company. Their process for entering invoices into the Medicaid system, which used to consume 120 staff hours each week, now takes less than an hour. The ContinuLink healthcare platform eliminated the potential for human error and significantly reduced IHC's Medicaid write-offs from $200,000 to $20,000 a year – a reduction of 90%.

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Ringling's agencies have been able to increase their revenue and achieve significant savings without having to add client service representatives/schedulers. With Complia Health, they achieved a run rate of $29M with the same staff it took them to run a $20M-a-year company. Reul said that before ContinuLink, one administrator was tasked with keeping track of all important paperwork that was coming and going. After ContinuLink, that administrator no longer had to chase down important information because it was all kept on one easy-to-access platform. ContinuLink also shows IHC all of the authorization information and tracks the paperwork requiring completion in order to get paid by Medicaid.

Implementation of the Affordable Care Act, along with federal budgetary wrangling, is changing the way services are being delivered in the U.S. There is a shift in focus from federal programs such as Medicare to state programs such as Medicaid and waiver programs. As Medicaid grows and introduces new waiver programs, agencies must ensure their systems can adapt to the new rules and requirements and automate the claims process.

With more and more individuals entering the Medicare and Medicaid systems, agencies cannot afford to ignore available efficiencies. Neither can they afford to lose money through Medicaid billing errors or payment delays. With state-of-the-art tools such as those from Complia Health's ContinuLink, agencies can gain the confidence and security they need to embrace this new business.

"I see that with the Affordable Care Act, as more people gain access to insurance, more people will qualify for care and there will be more lives to take care of. I think this software is going to get us where we need to be. On our old system, there was no way we could have handled the business we have today. I'm confident that ContinuLink will bring us to the next level and will help ensure we have what we need to grow our business to a $50-million-a-year company," said Ringling.

About Complia Health

Complia Health is a leading global provider of technology and expertise for the long-term and post-acute care market. Nearly 3,000 home health, residential, community care, and hospice organizations count on Complia Health for the clinical, operational, and financial solutions required to profitability deliver quality care. Complia Health's innovative products—including Procura, ContinuLink, Suncoast, Igea, and Progresa—are supported by a team of global health and technology experts located in the United States, Canada, and Australia. For more information, visit www.compliahealth.com.

For more information on how Complia Health can help:
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