



Healthcare Business Insights

Solution Provider Academy

CentraState Medical Center Improves Denial Management Process With Trace

Highlights

Profile

- New Jersey
- NPR \$203 million
- 284 Licensed Beds
- 85,000 Outpatient Visits

Challenges

- CentraState Medical Center was unable to verify information communicated between payers and staff working on insurance verification
- CentraState Medical Center was losing net revenue because of denials
- CentraState Medical Center's insurance verification process was costly and time consuming

Solution

- The White Stone Group's voice tool was implemented to record all calls for the insurance verification department
- CentraState Medical Center increased the use of voice tools, to improve call center accountability and better train customer service staff
- CentraState Medical Center implemented Trace's fax and electronic tools

Results

- CentraState Medical Center was able to increase the number of denials overturned, including claims ranging from \$800 to \$20,476
- CentraState Medical Center was able to decrease its printing costs as a result of the electronic tool
- By reviewing a majority of calls, customer service and employee professionalism have greatly improved

With Academy research showing that 11% of all claims are initially denied, managing denials can be a time consuming and labor intensive process. One of the most effective ways to overturn a denial is to communicate the evidence in favor of payment back to the payer. With 40% of Academy surveyed healthcare organizations looking to improve their net revenue through denial management, CentraState Medical Center provides an example of a successful denial management initiative that focuses on capturing the necessary documentation.

Challenge

As a community hospital in New Jersey serving a diverse population, CentraState Medical Center recognized the potential for net revenue improvement by improving its insurance verification and denial management processes. The Academy recently spoke with Gaye Werblin, Director of Patient Access, and other medical center administrators about the benefits Trace by the White Stone Group has provided CentraState Medical Center.

Prior to using Trace, CentraState Medical Center had no way to verify information communicated between payers and hospital staff. In addition, communication between various departments and physician offices was often a case of "he-said, she-said," Werblin explains. The Patient Access department was facing quite a few challenges from physicians and ancillary departments who were unsure if their patients were being told the correct set of instructions prior to care being rendered. The insurance verification department was printing out everything that was on an insurance company's website and scanning it into a patient's electronic medical record as evidence of coverage. The department was spending too much money on printing costs, and staff members were spending too much time engaged in the cumbersome process. Overall, CentraState was losing revenue and doing a tremendous amount of extra work.

"I think that Trace improves your workflow tremendously. It also allows your workers to have confidence that there is documentation and that they are doing a good job."

– Gaye Werblin
Director of Patient Access
CentraState Medical Center

Solution

In an effort to control costs and improve efficiency within the revenue cycle, CentraState partnered with Trace in 2004. Trace tracks and indexes communication to protect hospital revenue, quality and performance through three different offerings: voice, fax, and electronic capture. All three solutions function in similar ways, the communication is captured and then filed and indexed electronically for access by healthcare organization staff. CentraState Medical Center currently uses all three offerings but began working with the voice solution first.

Voice Solution. CentraState Medical Center implemented Trace's call recording technology in the Patient Access department, specifically for insurance verification. Trace voice tools capture any phone call made or received, as well as voicemails left. These captures are then indexed and made available for playback through a searchable web interface. Trace can also provide transcripts of the calls. When a discrepancy arises between the insurance company and the organization, CentraState obtains the

transcripts of the related calls for verification. Trace also provides benefits beyond insurance verification. “All of the calls going in and out are also recorded so we can go back and listen for training purposes and quality purposes,” Werblin explains. Today, CentraState’s credit center and call center record all ingoing and outgoing calls.

Fax Solution. Trace’s fax solution also creates a paperless archive of inbound and outbound faxes and other paper documents. This archive provides alerts for new faxes, unsuccessful transmission alerts and delivery confirmations. CentraState’s call center, as well as the pre-admission testing department, utilize the fax solution. “If we either record a call or [use the electronic or fax capture tool], it goes right into our system and the billing department gets access at the same time we do,” Werblin explains. The case management department uses the tool when contacting other facilities for patient placement; they are able to fax multiple facilities at the same time, saving time while providing all necessary parties with the documentation.

Electronic Solution. Trace’s electronic capture tool documents all business conducted through a website, email or any other electronic document. The tool captures images of the documents at the time of access and can be printed, forwarded, or faxed through the web interface. To further support their insurance verification process, “You pull up the insurance website and click, it saves, and you write down the transaction number,” Werblin explains. “You’re done. There is no scanning. It is just so much easier.”

For CentraState, The White Stone Group takes the lead in the implementation process, quickly and efficiently accomplishing the implementation within a few days. For the initial implementation of the tools, The White Stone Group worked directly with the IT department for the logistics of the implementation, and when it was time for go-live a trainer was on site at CentraState. “[The trainer] sat with each and every one of our employees and showed them how to work the system. For any of the pieces that we have ever put up, they have always brought a trainer and one or two people in to teach our employees,” Werblin says. The White Stone Group also has training webinars as well as a customer support center for transcript requests and any other questions that may arise.

Results

Trace solutions have allowed CentraState Medical Center to increase its revenue cycle efficiency. Growing from 10 initial users focusing on insurance verification, now there are as many as 75 end users in Patient Access, call centers, and the case management department.

Trace’s technologies have assisted CentraState Medical Center in overturning denials. For example, an insurance company denied a claim, stating a lack of notification for the appropriate level of care. CentraState located telephone records through Trace that demonstrated notification of a newborn’s (the patient’s) admission to the special care nursery—as opposed to the regular nursery. CentraState then sent the records as proof that notification was provided for the appropriate level of care and the payer overturned the denial with CentraState recovering the \$7,200 claim.

Denial Reason	Amount Received
Level of Care Requested	\$7,200
Lack of Pre-Certification	\$800
Level of Care Requested	\$20,476
Billing Dispute	\$1,600

These are only a few of the documented examples that are representative of a larger portion of revenue recovered by the medical center using Trace.

In addition to increased revenue, CentraState has experienced greater efficiencies for its patient access staff. “In our insurance verification department we were printing out everything,” Werblin describes. “Whatever benefits or eligibility were posted on the website we would print it out and then scan it into our electronic medical record.” Today, less printing occurs saving time, paper, and ink cartridges.

Overall satisfaction has greatly improved for patients, physicians, and employees. Physicians less often assume an error in patient preparation is the result of the call center or a patient access staff member. Employee training for patient satisfaction has improved because CentraState is able to record all calls for training and educational purposes. “We have so many calls where we thought we may have done a good job, and then we listen to it and realize we could have done a better job,” Werblin says. “Now we use it to train our employees about customer satisfaction.”

Trace has allowed CentraState Medical Center to improve its accountability with patients, physicians, payers, and even its own employees. CentraState is able to produce evidence to overturn a denial or demonstrate to a physician that they were following the order they received from the physician. “I think that Trace improves your workflow tremendously. It also allows your workers to have confidence that there is documentation and that they are doing a good job,” Werblin emphasizes.

About Trace by the White Stone Group

- Trace is a platform to manage communication in the healthcare industry
- The Trace system captures communication of any type (voice, fax, paper or electronic) and centralizes indexed records for easy processing, routing and retrieval
- Available as a single-department or enterprise-wide solution, Trace can be customized for the process and data needs of each unique service area
- For more information visit: www.tracecommunication.com