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health

Montgomery County Hospital District

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>
> **— Karen Webb, Billing Manager, Montgomery County Hospital District**

Client. Conroe, Texas-based provider of emergency and non-emergency transport services.

Challenge/Objective. Verifying the accuracy of patient demographic data collected at the time of service and more effectively segmenting patient accounts for increased revenue collection.

Resolution. Experian Health Identity Verification validates and corrects patient demographic information; Experian Health Patient Financial Clearance gauges a patient's likelihood to pay medical bills.

Results. Additional $1 million in annual revenue, representing a 10 percent increase; fewer A/R days.

Montgomery County Hospital District realizes an 80-to-1 return on investment by scoring and segmenting all open patient accounts
"The cost-effectiveness, accuracy and efficiency gained from using Experian Health are remarkable."

Client

Providing both emergency (EMS) and non-emergency ambulance transport, Montgomery County Hospital District (MCHD) was founded in 1977 in Conroe, Texas. The 30,000 yearly transports keep its 250 employees busy, both in emergency situations on the field and in the 12-employee billing office, where Karen Webb, Billing Manager at MCHD, provides oversight.

"Being the 911 service to the community, you have to transport patients no matter what — with or without any guarantee of payment for services rendered. A

majority of the time, we are unable to collect insurance information at the time of service," says Webb.

MCHD is certainly not alone. In fact, shared industry woes indicate that accurate information of any kind is difficult, if not impossible, to attain, and many EMS providers struggle simply to achieve 50 percent accuracy ratings on the information collected. For ambulance companies like MCHD, the absence of reliable and accurate information is simply not something that its back-office personnel can handle effectively without the use of technologies like Identity Verification and Patient Financial Clearance.

Challenge/Objective

MCHD sought help from self-pay accounts receivable specialists at Noah Management Group, Experian Healthcare's provider to the ambulance and other sub-acute markets, in October 2008. At that time, the billing office at MCHD was mailing up to five statements to every private-pay individual, and making more than 100 phone calls per day, simply to connect with fewer than 10 percent of the attempted contacts. Most of these, even after initial contact was made, were still unable to submit any payment for the services that had been rendered.

Resolution

Noah Management specialists recommended the use of Identity Verification and Patient Financial Clearance products to assist with scoring the large number of private-pay accounts according to each account's likelihood to pay while simultaneously updating all demographic information. By combining the knowledge of accounts that have a high payment likelihood with updated demographics, including name, address, phone, date of birth and Social Security number, MCHD was able to focus its internal collectors on touching only those accounts that had a high probability of payment. The single process and technology change paid enormous dividends, resulting in the first surplus ever in the department's 34-year history.

"The financial load has been lightened, and the staff is no longer spinning their wheels," says Webb. "We can now make a difference in every account that is touched."

New workflows have been created around the segmentation. Accounts with a high and medium likelihood for payment are now the focus of the in-house staff, while accounts with a low payment likelihood are mailed the minimum required number of statements before being quickly sent to third-party collection agencies. By sending accounts sooner to the third-party collection agencies, MCHD has not only freed up valuable internal resources, but also has been able to further negotiate for better third-party rates — a significant additional benefit for MCHD.

Corrected demographic information has proven to be valuable in a variety of ways. In addition to updated billing information, MCHD has utilized this new data to help recoup Medicaid money that had previously been left on the table.

Identity Verification and Patient Financial Clearance have provided a return on investment of more than 80-to-1 for MCHD. The positive results have definitely turned some heads within the organization and have piqued the interest of many external stakeholders within its local government and beyond.

"The cost-effectiveness, accuracy and efficiency gained from using Experian Healthcare are remarkable," says Kelly Curry, COO at MCHD. "I cannot imagine doing EMS billing without it."

Results

"Segmenting private-pay accounts, according to payment likelihood, resulted in an annual revenue increase of $1 million, or 10 percent. Combined with the 20 days it shaved off of our average accounts receivable, the minor process change resulted in a definite organizational win," says Webb.