



Texas Oncology

“The continued level of support that we receive is what really stands out about Experian Health.”

— Chris Henderson, Executive Director,
Texas Oncology Business Services

Client. Largest independent oncology practice in the United States with 345 physicians and more than 170 sites of service.

Challenge/Objective. Improve financial performance through automating manual claims auditing processes to more effectively identify payment variances, monitor payer contract performance, negotiate better contract terms and minimize denials resulting from frequent payer policy changes.

Resolution. Experian Health Contract Manager expedites and streamlines underpayment identification and recovery processes; Experian Health Payer Alerts updates staff on the latest payer policy changes; and Experian Health Contract Analysis provides customized reports and analytics based on real-world utilization.

Results. Added more than \$1.1 million to the bottom line, fewer claim denials and improved contract analysis capabilities.

Texas Oncology enhances revenue cycle performance with Experian Health

“Experian Health does everything we set out for it to do.”

Client

As part of its strategy to optimize revenue, Texas Oncology began looking for ways to drive efficiencies and streamline workflow. Since the organization previously devoted three staff members to manually verifying the accuracy of its reimbursement, Contract Manager presented an opportunity to boost both productivity and the bottom line.

“Staff had to sort through stacks of explanation of benefits and use spreadsheets to compare payments received against contract allowables,” says Chris Henderson, Executive Director for Texas Oncology Business Services. “We were only able to look at about 30 percent of our billings at any one time, and the data that we relied on was at least three months old.”

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Frequent policy and procedure changes by insurance companies further complicated claims processes, making it a challenge for the practice's busy staff to efficiently track and manage updates published in newsletters or posted on payer websites. "We'd receive a denial for a particular drug and then find out it was no longer covered," says Henderson.

Challenge/Objective

After forming a committee to review potential technology products and services, Texas Oncology carefully outlined exactly what it was looking for in a vendor partner, including a contract data repository, an ad hoc reporting tool, an appeal letter generator and access to payer rule tables. Beyond these features, two of the most important criteria were payer contract load expertise and maintenance support. "If you aren't able to maintain the quality of your data, you'll end up losing credibility with payers," explains Henderson.

The practice also sought a way to streamline and improve its contract analysis capabilities so it could gain better insight into the root causes of any payment issues and correct them before moving forward with new contracts.

Following a formal review process that included interviews and product demonstrations, the committee ultimately

chose Experian Health to help optimize its financial performance. "Experian Health was the only vendor that met our criteria in every category," says Henderson.

Resolution

Texas Oncology began using Experian Health in April 2009 at the conclusion of a 90-day implementation process. With Experian Health's hands-on assistance during on-site training sessions, the practice was able to easily incorporate the technology into its day-to-day workflow. As a result, staff immediately saw the advantages of having an automated tool.

"We went from manually reviewing claims that were three months old to looking at every line item for every claim loaded in Contract Manager," says Henderson. "The benefits of auditing claims have been exponentially greater with the technology that Experian Health brings to the table. Now, if we catch a variance, we can react in days rather than months."

Texas Oncology also utilizes Contract Analysis to spot any payment trends or issues that could potentially affect reimbursement. This automated approach to auditing contract performance has proven to be more accurate than the complex spreadsheets the practice relied on previously.

"We can pull a specific payer and look at the actual utilization, so we're more precise in our ability to assess how contracts are actually performing," says Henderson.

In August 2009, Texas Oncology further expanded its use of Experian Health to include Payer Alerts. These daily email notifications of payer policy changes from Experian Health are customized to reflect the practice's specific payers and subspecialties, giving staff quick insight into any updates or changes that may affect payment.

"Every morning, I wake up to my Payer Alerts in my email inbox," says Henderson. Once reviewed, these policy updates are stored on an internal website that is frequently accessed by billing staff and also forwarded weekly to the practice's numerous locations.

Results

Since implementing Contract Manager, Texas Oncology has recovered more than \$1.1 million in contractual underpayments. With this significant addition to the bottom line, the practice recouped the five-year cost of Experian Health in less than 18 months.

Experian Health bolsters the bottom line at Texas Oncology

Recoveries from successful appeals:

\$1.1 million

“When you can prove a positive return on investment, there’s no question about whether or not you should keep using this approach,” says Henderson.

Meanwhile, Payer Alerts keeps billing staff abreast of the most recent payer policy changes, resulting in fewer claim errors and improved cash flow. “Now that we know about these changes in advance, we can forewarn everyone, which helps to reduce denials and speed payment,” adds Henderson.

Overall, Texas Oncology’s relationship with Experian Health has more than met expectations.

“The continued level of support that we receive is what really stands out about Experian Health,” says Henderson.

“The ongoing nature of our relationship ensures not only that we create an invaluable repository of data, but also that we maintain the quality of that data for improved financial performance.”