

# 22% increase in average cash collections for St. Luke's University Health Network with Collections Optimization Manager

\$7.8M

Increase in average monthly cash collections in just 10 months

86%

Employee satisfaction score

740 hrs

Average time savings per month in making outbound calls to patients

253 hrs

Average time savings per month due to automated payment IVR

274%

Increase in automated outbound calls to patients within 10 months

## About

St. Luke's University Health Network in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, is a nonprofit health system with an annual net patient revenue of around \$3 billion. More than 19,000 staff deliver services at 14 campuses and over 300 outpatient facilities.

## Challenge

Concerns about increasing bad debt from a growing volume of patient accounts in collections led St. Luke's to seek a more efficient approach to bring in more revenue. Their manual process of calling patients to collect balances was inefficient and unsuccessful.

According to Cindy Samuels, Senior Manager for Patient Revenue Services at St. Luke's, the organization's existing manual approach was time-consuming and expensive.

"Staff would be on the phone all day long, reaching out to patients. It was labor-intensive and inefficient. The staff were not even collecting enough money to cover their own salaries. It really was a waste of time and money."

With staff burnout becoming a concern, the team initially considered outsourcing some of the work, but concluded that automation would be a better fit, since many employees now work remotely.

## St. Luke's University Health Network

### Resolution

Impressed by the positive response of Experian Health solutions from other departments and easy implementation with Epic®, St. Luke's electronic health record system (EHR), Samuels decided to adopt Collections Optimization Manager and PatientDial.

#### Targeted cash collections through patient account segmentation

The first step in optimizing collections was to segment patient accounts according to the likelihood of payment based on credit, behavioral and demographic data. This data-driven approach ensured that the collections' staff were targeting the right patients for payment outreach, instead of blindly reaching out to everyone. Staff was also able to screen and filter Medicaid accounts that shouldn't be worked on to begin with.

#### Streamlining and expanding patient communication through automation

The second step was automating the patient communication strategy to handle the large volume of calls to alleviate the burden on the staff. This was ideal for Samuels and her team as the team was working remotely. The platform provided both live agent and recorded messaging campaigns in a blended call environment — effectively helping the staff reach out to more patients and collecting more in balances.

### Results

#### Collections Optimization Manager and PatientDial — a winning combination for St. Luke's

In just 10 months after implementation, St. Luke's **increased their collection rate by 22%**, collecting an **average of \$7.8 million in monthly self-pay cash collections**. This was made possible by prioritizing accounts based on the likelihood of payment and scrubbing out patient accounts for Medicaid and charity.

Furthermore, by implementing automated patient outreach, the staff can now successfully connect with their extensive patient base and experienced a **remarkable 274% surge in outbound calls for payment collection** in the same time period.

PatientDial's automated dialer eliminates hold times for staff and patients and leaves automated voice messages when calls go unanswered. This has enabled St. Luke's to save **an average of 185 hours per week in manual patient outreach**.

A fully automated and integrated IVR solution allows St. Luke's patients to look up their balance and make a payment using their phone at any time. This has freed up **62 hours per week** in staff time doing manual work. **Employee satisfaction scores have jumped 14%**, thanks to these efficiency gains.

Samuels says that support from Experian Health was key to achieving these results.

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“The relationship has been very helpful. Regular meetings with Collections Optimization Manager consultants have helped us resolve issues faster with one-to-one guidance and expertise.

We get a lot of reporting from Experian, which allows us to track the value created by Collections Optimization Manager.

We also leveraged knowledge from Experian Health's annual High-Performance Summit and soaked up information from other providers who were using Collections Optimization Manager.”

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— **Cindy Samuels**, Senior Manager, Patient Revenue Services

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## Case study

# St. Luke's University Health Network

Her advice for organizations considering a similar approach is to focus on collaboration and communication.

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**“You need all the right players to be actively engaged. Celebrate success! Communicate key performance indicators throughout your team and organization and recognize achievements.”**

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The department's next step is to explore the use of [PatientText](#), which uses text messaging to increase patient engagement and collections.

## About Experian Health

Hospitals, health systems, and physicians' groups have come to rely on Experian Health for revenue acceleration and profit gains through automation, cleaner claim submissions, fewer underpayments and a reduced cost to collect.

[Collections Optimization Manager](#) helps you identify “who's who” using in-depth data and advanced analytics so you can focus staff resources where they make the most sense.

[PatientDial](#) reduces the cost to collect by automating patient communications. This cloud-based dialing platform enables you to reach more patients, more efficiently, delivering convenience for staff and patients.