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UCHealth writes off $26 million in charity care by automating financial assistance process.

UCHealth, located in Aurora, Colorado, is a highly acclaimed non-profit health system consistently recognized as one of the top hospitals in the country by US News & World Report. With 12 hospitals and more than 15,000 employees, it serves the population of Colorado, southern Wyoming and western Nebraska.

> **$26 million** dispensed in charity care in 2023

> **+1700** financial assistance cases approved in 2023

> **600** cases closed in Aug 2023, reducing workload

Challenge

When the state of Colorado released charity care and community benefits data of non-profit hospitals in the region, UCHealth's spending was below expectations, despite having an equitable charity care policy in place. As a result, UCHealth decided to re-evaluate their charity process.

They examined the practices of other leading health systems and discovered that they lacked a crucial feature: a presumptive charity functionality that identifies potential candidates for financial assistance early on in the care process. This feature would not only help patients avoid accumulating unpaid medical bills but also prevent UCHealth from incurring bad debt.

Additionally, UCHealth was aware that the state of Colorado was about to implement new legislation regarding charity care. The purpose of this legislation was to set a cap on charges for low-income patients. Anticipating an increase in

patient volumes as a result, UCHealth sought to proactively prepare for this change.

Their goal was to efficiently screen for financial assistance while minimizing additional workload on their staff by finding efficient solutions that allowed for automation.

Resolution

Using data to understand patients' unique financial needs

UCHealth implemented Experian's Patient Financial Clearance, a patient financial assistance solution, in early 2023.

Experian helped UCHealth improve how they analyze a patient's income. Instead of just looking at the exact income amount, UCHealth now considers the Federal Poverty Level ratio and propensity-to-pay segments to calculate a patient's Healthcare Financial Risk Score. A unique score which takes into account the patient's past healthcare payment history and credit scores.

With automated financial assistance, staff can now determine financial assistance faster without relying on patients for information. This automation has also increased efficiency by reducing the time spent per patient case.

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Results

Compassion with compliance

With this data-driven approach, UCHealth has streamlined the enrollment process for financial assistance and is now able to connect patients to appropriate financial pathways. Streamlined online applications and document submission make the process easier for both patient and staff member and enable automated, personalized payment plans for patients. The process also helps meet legal requirements efficiently.

As of 2023, UCHealth has disbursed **$26 million** in charity care with more than **1700 cases approved**. The automation of screening patients has reduced the workload on full-time employees and increased their efficiency, with **600 cases** closed in the month of August of 2023 itself. Integration with Epic® simplifies the process for employees, eliminating the need to juggle between multiple software systems.

Additionally, identifying financial assistance needs with presumptive charity saves UCHealth from misclassifying patient accounts as bad debt, minimizing financial loss and improving patient experience.

Andrew Pederson, Director of Patient Financial Experience at UCHealth lauds the supportive and engaged Experian team.

"I love the availability of the Experian team. They are quick to solve any issue and get you back up and running in no time."

For revenue leaders seeking solutions to similar problems, Pederson advises "Get out of your own way and just do it" and recommends Experian as the preferred vendor for working with Federal Poverty Level (FPL) data.

About Experian Health

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

Experian Health partners with over 63 percent of US hospitals and more than 7,700 other risk-bearing entities to provide data-driven insights that connect and simplify healthcare for all. We offer solutions for every stage of the patient journey, including patient scheduling, registration, check-in, estimates and payments.

[Patient Financial Clearance](#) simplifies and streamlines patient screening for charity programs with easy-to-use automated tools. By utilizing Experian's best-in-class data, providers are able to accurately predict a patient's ability and likelihood to pay medical bills. This not only saves them time and effort, but also reduces the costs associated with collecting payments from patients who are unable or unwilling to pay.

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