

Per-Visit Billings Increase by 35 Percent After Deploying Electronic Clinical Solution

Appalachian Therapy Center has seen its per-visit billings increase by over 35 percent – for \$700,000 in additional annual billings. Back in 2001, they replaced their paper-based system for tracking patient care and billing information with TherapySource, a wireless point-of-care solution.

Appalachian Therapy Center, a chain of four clinics, headquartered in Maryville, Tennessee, employs some 25 physical therapists, which together see about 35,000 patient visits per year. The center provides a range of physical therapy, sports therapy, and other services, with an emphasis on orthopedics. Appalachian Therapy Center has great therapists, but their paper-based system for tracking patient care and billing information was time consuming, cumbersome and not always complete enough to obtain full reimbursement. Since the company replaced its paper-based system with TherapySource, they have seen:

- over 35% increase in per-visit billings
- Better tracking for therapists real-time work
- Better documentation of patient progress
- \$700,000 in additional annual billings

TherapySource gave the center wireless connectivity so its therapists could roam freely— rather than having to leave the patient's side to use a workstation.

Most patients are covered by insurance companies or government programs such as Medicare or Medicaid. Insurers and other payers require exact documentation of work performed, including the proper use of billing codes to obtain reimbursement.

Appalachian Therapy Center's old system was based on handwritten entries by therapists,

augmented by dictated notes. Folders would often pile up during the day, with the paperwork being completed later. The delays could lead to incomplete or incorrect documentation and use of incorrect billing codes. The errors in documentation often meant that Appalachian Therapy Center was under-reimbursed for the services provided to patients. TherapySource contains coding and compliance rules to help users maintain accuracy and consistency in documentation, which helps to achieve compliance with federal, state and private payers.

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Baron Johnson Chief Financial Officer Appalachian Therapy Center

35 Percent Increase in Per-Visit Billings

Joe Black, Chief Executive Officer and President of Appalachian Therapy Center, says the solution has worked even better than advertised. "Source Medical predicted we'd see at least a 10 percent increase in our per-visit billings," Black says. "We've seen at least a 35 percent increase in per patient billing through elimination of 'leakage'—that is, providing services that either aren't billed for or that are incorrectly billed for." Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Baron Johnson, who is a managing partner of Appalachian Therapy Center, says he knew he needed a system to bring more accuracy to billing. "It's not that our people were missing anything," Johnson says. "The documentation sometimes just wasn't good enough for what the insurers required. Poor documentation costs you in all sorts of ways.

Claims get rejected, or they are reimbursed at a lower rate. You can lose referral sources. We've always had a great staff; we just needed some help documenting what we do." Johnson is delighted with the results of the solution. "We see about 35,000 patient visits per year," he says. "With the more accurate billing information we got through TherapySource, we generated some \$700,000 in additional billings. As a CFO, that's great news. As a partner, that's even greater news."

Helps Therapists Track Their Work in Real-Time

This solution helps physical therapists track their work with patients in real-time, which increases the accuracy of the patient record and helps the center provide the documentation required to be reimbursed from insurance companies and government programs.

Both Johnson and Black credit the easy-to-use graphical user interface. "Source Medical sent their lead customer service rep to spend Thursday and Friday with us, assuming that we were going to have some difficulty adjusting to these new devices. By mid-morning on Thursday, her job was finished. We made the transition in minutes. It was that easy." Black says.

David McMullan, Group Vice President for Therapy Solutions at Source Medical, spent several years as a physical therapist and created TherapySource as a way to streamline his own work. So he knew that, to produce results, the solution had to be very user friendly. "Clinicians actually use TherapySource because it fits into the natural workflow of a rehab clinic," McMullan says. "We try to make products that are so intuitive and powerful that they become part of how clinicians work each day," states Ralph Riccardi, President and Chief Executive Office for TherapySource division of Source Medical.

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Better Documentation of Patient Progress

Working with TherapySource helps clinicians get a better understanding of how the patient is progressing. "With a written file, you might scribble down 'Patient's feeling better. See them next week.' TherapySource helps you to be more analytical," Black says. "Typically in physical therapy, you are analyzing things like range of motion, and testing muscles," Black continues. "Your notations from the previous visits are automatically loaded for reference during the current session. With just a point and a click, you can make minor notations that can be important to tracking the big picture. You might change a 'moderate' muscle spasm to a 'mild' muscle spasm.

You can do this almost instantaneously, and information like this accumulates into a far richer picture of the patient history than simply scribbling down 'Patient feels better. As a result, the referring physician is happy and the documentation supports reimbursement requirements.'"

For more information about TherapySource call 866-245-8093.

For more information about Appalachian Therapy Center, visit their Web site at: www.appalachiantherapy.com

