Centegra Health System exceeds cash goal with streamlined revenue cycle

nThrive implements full business office outsourcing in less than 90 days

Business issue

Centegra Health System (Centegra) needed to streamline revenue cycle operations to sustain cash flow and reduce cost to collect so it could thrive in the industry's new reimbursement model environment.

Overview

Centegra is a network of three hospitals and multiple health care and wellness facilities in Illinois. Centegra took its name from the words "center," "integrity" and "integral," signifying that it is the center of health care for the communities it serves in McHenry and Kane counties. It is McHenry County's largest employer, with nearly 4,000 associates and 500 volunteers. In addition to its hospitals, Centegra includes the Sage Cancer Center, Centegra Health Bridge Fitness Centers, Centegra Gavers Breast Center and multiple immediate care centers and physician care locations throughout the region.

Problem

Centegra had begun its revenue cycle transformation in 2013. The system had recently migrated to a fully integrated revenue cycle platform that included electronic health records, physician order entry and a new patient accounting system. The goal was to successfully complete the implementation with minimal impact to the bottom line. However, the conversion, particularly to the patient accounting system, revealed major gaps and inefficiencies in Centegra's revenue cycle process. Concerned that they would not be able to recover in time to meet cash goals, the organization's leaders began looking for a partner who could very quickly help them improve net cash collections from payors and continue to manage and reduce accounts receivable (A/R) days.

"Inheriting a post-conversion, bloated A/R was painful," said Robin Stoen, Centegra director of revenue cycle. "We needed a partner who could evaluate our needs and implement revenue cycle solutions quickly and with the least impact on cash and operations. Time was of the essence."

102%

of cash goal collected for A/R Services within **two months** of go live

Project deployment was swift, with launch in **under 90 days**

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> **ROBIN STOEN, DIRECTOR OF REVENUE CYCLE, CENTEGRA HEALTH SYSTEM**

Solution

Centegra already had built a strong long-term relationship with nThrive, so the executive team chose to utilize nThrive A/R Services with full business office outsourcing and expert consulting to help convert receivables to revenue quickly and efficiently. In less than 90 days, nThrive was able to augment A/R resources through remote billing and collections outsourcing services and manage all of Centegra's active A/R.

nThrive interviewed Centegra business office staff members and retained several employees to create a blended team, which was integral to fast-tracking the revenue cycle transformation. nThrive also deployed a director on-site at Centegra for 30 days prior to go-live. Centegra and nThrive teams followed a detailed project plan to streamline front- and back-end processes and reduce the potential impact on cash flow. Weekly meetings

evaluated progress, addressed issues and made sure all departments had what they needed to keep moving forward. nThrive kept the on-site director in place for six months after go-live to monitor systems and workflow.

In addition to the full business office outsourcing engagement, Centegra also implemented several of nThrive's revenue cycle products to gain greater efficiency in the financial clearance process and prepare for reimbursement changes. These include Claims Management, Contract Modeling, Charge Capture Audit and Collections Management.

Value

Centegra went live with nThrive A/R Services 30 days faster than a standard implementation, perhaps the biggest success of the implementation. As a result, within two months of going live, Centegra was able to collect 102 percent of its cash goal. The delivery system is still working with nThrive to realize the benefits from the expedited outsourcing conversion.

"The fast and efficient implementation of the full business outsourcing engagement enabled our team to accelerate cash while improving productivity," said Stoen. "In conjunction with the additional tools and technology that nThrive put in place for us, we are now in a position to sustainably optimize our financial improvement. nThrive provided us with the expertise, best practice processes and tools to enhance our revenue cycle operations, and we continue to see opportunities and improvements every week."

nThrive has been able to provide Centegra with comprehensive reports and analyses of A/R performance to better calculate and predict cash flow. Through root cause analytics, Centegra is better equipped to track payment variances and identify overpayments and underpayments in hopes of quickly turning time into cash.

To sustain financial viability, both teams continue to hold weekly multidisciplinary revenue cycle meetings to improve processes and stay aligned with best practices.

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