

# Maricopa transforms claims denial backlog into \$28.5 million gain



## Stats

One of the nation's largest acute-care safety net providers

Arizona's only nationally verified burn center

449 beds

16,500 inpatients and 432,600 outpatients annually



## Value

Recovered \$28.5 million in claims denials in one year

Achieved \$17 million more than cash goal

Cash collections against net patient service revenue at 104 percent



## Solution

Sustainable claims denials prevention process

Identification of root causes of voluminous claims denials

Ability to bring in cash by working the backlog of claims denials

Establishment of denials prevention steering committee

## Business issue

Maricopa Integrated Health System (MIHS) faced a sizeable backlog of claims denials, threatening cash collections and financial viability of the system.

## Overview

Based in Phoenix, Ariz., MIHS is one of the nation's largest acute-care safety net providers, caring for more than 16,500 inpatients and 432,600 outpatients annually. Arizona's only nationally verified burn center, it is the leading provider of emergency services to nearly 5,000 burn patients annually from across the southwestern U.S. and northern Mexico.

## Problem

Maricopa's revenue cycle team faced a growing denials backlog, with thousands of denied claims stacking up. Lacking insight into underlying reasons for the denials, the system struggled with how to address the issue – and it continued to grow. "We knew we had a denials issue and we did not have the ability to identify the problem," said Siobhan Mee, Maricopa director, revenue performance management. "We also didn't have the staff to work the accounts we had, with denial backlogs averaging 5,000-plus in the average worker queue."

## Solution

Maricopa engaged nThrive to help work backlog accounts for near-term cash flow and to identify the root causes for sustainable process improvement. Requests for records from Federal Emergency Services (FES) plans were revealed to be their number one denial challenge, along with a lack of precertification due to a systems logic issue. Once these and other uncovered issues were resolved, Maricopa began to see an improvement and was armed with a sustainable denials prevention process.

## Value

In less than a year, Maricopa recovered \$28.5 million, which is \$17 million ahead of its cash goal. Cash collections against net patient service revenue are at 104 percent. "Outsourcing was absolutely the right call, and I would recommend it to other organizations that have similar problems, if nothing more than to help identify what the root causes of the denials are to avoid them going forward," said Nancy Kaminski, vice president, Revenue Cycle at Maricopa.



Outsourcing was absolutely the right call and I would recommend it to other organizations that have similar problems, if nothing more than to help identify what the root causes of the denials are to avoid them going forward."

**NANCY KAMINSKI, VICE PRESIDENT,  
REVENUE CYCLE, MARICOPA**

## Engage with nThrive

Visit [www.nThrive.com](http://www.nThrive.com)

E-mail [solutions@nThrive.com](mailto:solutions@nThrive.com)