

CASE STUDY

CLINICAL INTEGRATION FOR REVENUE CAPTURE ON CERNER COMMUNITYWORKS

Impact Advisors utilizes workflow analysis, charge auditing, and system integration skills to uncover opportunities for increasing revenue at a critical access hospital

BUSINESS CHALLENGE:

Southwest Health System was originally opened in 1914 to care for the community of southwest Colorado. Today, it is a 25-bed critical access hospital offering a vast array of inpatient and outpatient services to its community. In addition to the hospital, Southwest Health System operates 10 ambulatory clinics (Southwest Medical Group).

In 2016, Southwest recognized the need to focus on its technology, including infrastructure updates, IT function (e.g., help desk, equipment deployment, login support) and software application optimization and integration. For example, Cerner CommunityWorks was installed in 2014 and was being utilized across the hospital. Two years post-go-live, the organization was still not utilizing the system to its fullest potential. Southwest was also interested in understanding and capturing lost revenue in their clinical areas.

Impact Advisors was engaged in a collaborative effort to review workflows, develop reports and to identify revenue maximization opportunities.

SOLUTION:

Initially, Impact Advisors focused on conducting a general analysis of clinical and revenue cycle workflows as well as integration of related applications. After initial investigation, however, it was determined that Southwest's charge processes were outdated and not widely understood across the hospital, leading to lost revenue.



SOUTHWEST
HEALTH SYSTEM

A community and critical access hospital located in southwest Colorado providing both hospital and clinic-based services.

Business Challenge:

- Two years after Cerner implementation, operating without baselines or guiding principles
- Few remaining original Super Users or staff who designed the system
- Misuse or deficiency of EHR applications and integration
- Outdated processes and communication barriers
- Undefined and unimplemented change control process

Solution:

- Interviewed unit directors
- Evaluated current charges and created baselines
- Reviewed and optimized charge master and created unit-based charge sheets
- Utilized workflow documentation for automating 70% of procedure/supply charges
- Monitored charges with dashboards and baselines

Business Results:

- Increased chargeable item capture, leading to gross revenue increase of over 4% monthly
- Achieved best revenue month in over 5 years after only 4 months

SOLUTION: (CONTINUED)

Subsequently, Impact Advisors started a unit-by-unit process of evaluating current charges against reimbursable opportunities. A short-term batch sheet workflow process was created to collect the missed procedure and supply charges taking place in the units, as capabilities were being reviewed in the EHR. The team created reports to quantify lost revenue opportunities and create baselines from clinical documentation. Then, they applied their knowledge of Cerner Millennium to optimize workflows, ensuring automatic charge capture via documentation where available or the creation of pick lists (with assigned ownership) for the more complex procedures lacking documentation or functionality capabilities. The final step was to create dashboards for senior leadership to monitor actual charge capture versus projected baselines.

BUSINESS RESULTS:

Impact Advisors' understanding of system integration along with a broad knowledge of both revenue cycle and clinical applications enabled some venues to capture 70% of charges automatically by documentation.

In January 2017, Southwest Memorial Hospital achieved its best fiscal month in the last five years, **increasing gross revenue over 27% compared to January 2016**. The group sustained this success, showing a 13% increase in February 2017, compared to 2016. Today, Southwest Memorial and Impact Advisors continue their work to identify other opportunities to optimize charge capture processes and realize the full value of the Cerner CommunityWorks EHR.

ABOUT IMPACT ADVISORS:

Impact Advisors works with leading healthcare organizations across the country, providing objective expertise to improve the value and effectiveness of revenue services, including operational workflow and system enhancement. We have deep healthcare revenue cycle application management knowledge and understand the importance of accurate, timely data for cash flow management, performance reporting and analytics

For more information about Impact Advisors or our Revenue Cycle Optimization services, visit www.impact-advisors.com.

“After struggling through an EHR implementation that left clinical and revenue cycle operations segmented and ineffective, causing frustration throughout the organization, Impact [Advisors] instituted workflows and automated processes to create efficiencies for clinicians and ensure revenue capture, making a significant improvement to our bottom line and helping our staff to work as one cohesive team.”

Angela Kobel

Chief Information Officer and
Chief Financial Officer
Southwest Health System