

Integrated Solutions

FOR ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT

FORMS PROCESSING STREAMLINES INSURANCE DATA ENTRY PROCESS

A medical billing organization cuts the time needed to process a benefits form from 3 days to 4 hours.

by Julie Ritzer Ross

Practicare Medical Management, Inc. offers medical billing and accounts receivable management services to more than 50 multispecialty medical practices in New York and New Jersey. A significant portion of Practicare's work involves the daily processing of 100 to 130 explanation of benefits (EOBs) documents and payments sent by insurance companies to healthcare providers. EOBs detail individual services and procedures performed for a patient and the amount the insurance company has paid for each one.

The job of handling EOBs is more complicated than it appears, according to James Antonacci, Practicare's president and CEO. "EOBs have different formats; it is not uncommon for an individual patient's information to vary in length from a few lines to several pages, depending on the number of procedures performed." An EOB may also consist of a single line per claim, one full page per claim, multiple pages per claim, or multiple claims per page, with longer claims running over from one page to another. Plus, each insurance company uses its own EOB procedure and diagnostic codes, format, and rules.

SCANNING EOBs ELIMINATES ERRORS

About three years ago, Practicare looked for a solution that would streamline its EOB processing. "Our manual system was very inefficient," Antonacci states. Posting information from the paper documents to the company's proprietary practice management system was labor intensive, and misfiled EOBs took a long time to find.

Installation Profile

Technology User: Practicare Medical Management, Inc. provides medical billing expertise and accounts receivable management services to healthcare professionals, serving more than 50 multispecialty medical practices in New York and New Jersey. Every day, Practicare processes 100 to 130 explanation of benefits (EOB) forms and payments sent by insurance companies to healthcare providers.

Problem: Practicare needed to automate and streamline its manual EOB processing system. Posting information from the paper documents to the company's proprietary practice management system required too many people and too much time. Additionally, misfiled EOBs sometimes made it difficult to locate documents.

Solution: Practicare implemented AnyDocEOB from AnyDoc Software. EOBs received by Practicare are scanned and converted into computer-readable format; data is then populated into the correct fields of the appropriate templates. The software includes a balancing feature that checks scanned EOBs to ensure accurate claim amounts.

"We knew we had to automate the process of moving data to our practice management system."

James Antonacci, Practicare Medical Management, Inc.

with capabilities that extended beyond pure scanning and retrieval. "We knew we had to automate the process of moving data to our practice management system," Antonacci says. The practice management systems is a proprietary application through which the company generates patient invoices for its clients.

Implementation of the solution began in early 2005 and spanned a few weeks. As the rollout proceeded, Practicare's on-staff programmers wrote a program that allows claims payment and denial data to be extracted from EOBs and uploaded to the practice management system. They also configured 11 EOB templates to fit various insurance companies' formats.

Currently, EOBs received by Practicare are scanned using one Fujitsu and two Kodak scanners. The software then converts all printed data into computer-readable format, analyzing each scanned image, and populates the data

fields of the appropriate template. Individual EOB records are kept together — whether they include a single line item or multiple pages.

Prior to being sent to an operator for verification, the scanned EOBs are evaluated by a balancing feature in the software. This feature identifies, totals, crosschecks, and verifies subtotals listed on the documents. Any lines that do not balance are flagged, enabling operators to insert and correct detail and subtotal lines once again before information is uploaded to the practice management system.

A component of the system called AnyDoc BROKERit retains scanned electronic EOB images. Patient information can then be accessed later from employees' desktops, in full-page form or by each individual patient record.

AUTOMATED FORMS PROCESSING CUTS PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS 30%

Antonacci says Practicare is seeing significant benefits from the solution. For example, the company can process its current volume of EOBs with approximately 30% fewer personnel than in the past, leading to a labor cost savings. "It used to take 3 days to complete the entire process of handling an EOB from receipt, through entry of data into the practice management system; now, it's 4 hours," he adds. Because automated extraction and transfer of payment and denial data to the practice management system minimizes rekeying, it increases data accuracy. Professionals can devote a higher percentage of their time to solving customer problems, rather than posting payments and hunting down files. "Just as importantly," Antonacci concludes, "the payback was very rapid, at about 13 months. This system really was an investment in future growth." □

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