



Case Study

Five Fold Revenue Increase in Five Years

Centra Health –
Health Care Enterprise

Overview

Located in Lynchburg, Virginia, Centra Health is one of the state's leading health care systems. The fact that Centra's Lynchburg General Hospital was named one of America's Top 100 Cardiovascular Hospitals for the fourth time attests to that.

Centra Health has some 4,000 health professionals who provide comprehensive medical care to more than 350,000 patients a month at 140 locations. The staff provides medical care in a variety of settings. Centra Health comprises two hospitals and a growing blend of multi-specialty physician practices including family practice, internal medicine, OB/GYN, oncology, psychiatry, and acute pain management. The facilities also include a sleep clinic, a wound care center, several rural health clinics, and various mammography centers. There is no doubt that this award-winning health care center is thriving. But it wasn't always this way.

Before athenahealth

In September 2001, Centra Health was caring for nearly 15,000 patients a month in 20 locations. While it was much smaller than its impressive operation today, the enterprise suffered from serious performance issues. Its in-house practice management system could not keep pace with Centra Health's expanding practice. The in-house system provided inaccurate and unreliable patient reports, while Centra's days in accounts receivable (DAR) was a staggering 151 days

At that time, Centra Health's internal revenue cycle system was not automated so users were required to track all transactions on their own. "We were forced to manually track all claims that had been submitted and we were seeing that, because many of the patient reports contained incorrect information, the claims were not getting processed. In many instances, the operation was unaware of this fact because the current system did not possess an automatic alert mechanism. In the end, we ran into many situations where we ended up having to take a loss," said Tammy Hall-Tweedy, RN, Director of Centra Health Professional Services.

A Decision to Change

Led by Hall-Tweedy, Centra Health began the search for a new revenue cycle management service for its ambulatory practices. The team looked at more than 100 practice management vendors. After careful study, in February 2002, Centra Health decided on athenahealth, Inc. to automate and streamline its patient scheduling, registration, claims processing, and collections. athenaCollector,SM the athenahealth practice management solution, provided Centra Health with a secure, web-based system for physician practice management and billing services.



athenahealth

there is a better way

AT A GLANCE

CLIENT

Centra Health, Lynchburg, VA

ORGANIZATION

A regional, not-for-profit health care system providing comprehensive care in a variety of settings

- ▶ 115 Physicians
- ▶ 350,000 Patient visits per month
- ▶ 4,000 Employees

ISSUES

- ▶ Limited growth potential
- ▶ Incorrect claims reporting
- ▶ Average of 151 days in accounts receivable (DAR)

SOLUTION

athenaCollectorSM

RESULTS

- ▶ Grown from 20 physicians to 115 in 5 years
- ▶ Financial visibility through work flow automation
- ▶ 68% reduction in DAR



Centra Health

After an efficient implementation process, Centra Health began using athenaCollector,SM athenahealth's practice management system. As Centra Health's staff moved through daily administrative tasks, athenaCollector quickly delivered a systematic reduction in claims processing errors and a significant drop in the number of denied claims. With instant access to athenahealth's continuously updated database of payer codes and rules, Centra Health soon experienced an accelerated accounts receivable cycle, and a dramatic reduction in their claims processing costs.

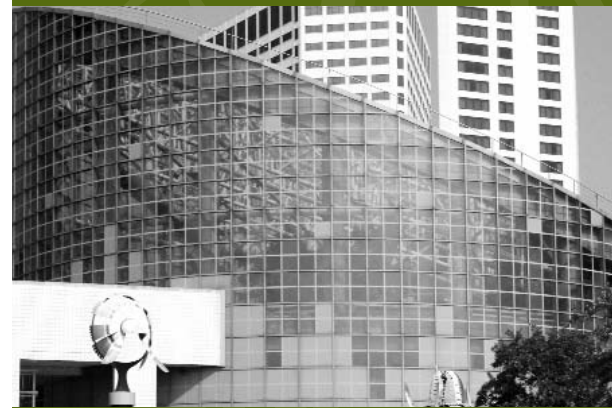
After athenahealth: Transparency and Growth

With athenaCollector in place, Centra Health could easily submit claims and monitor claim status throughout the enterprise. Thanks to athenahealth's "hold buckets" feature, the staff was automatically notified when claims were denied by a payer and why, so they were able to resolve the issues quickly and re-submit the claims. With greater transparency into the billing process, Centra could identify trends and patterns that helped generate "clean" claims the first time around, something not possible with the previous system. These new capabilities have had a very positive impact on the practice's accounts receivable cycle: Centra Health has dropped its DAR 68%.

Centra has also dramatically improved their practices' reporting capabilities. "Now reports are accurate and timely. Everything is instantaneous. I can get reports in three seconds as opposed to the past when I had to wait several hours for a report to generate, a report which, in many cases, wasn't always accurate," added Hall-Tweedy.

athenahealth has proven to be a phenomenal tool for developing operational policies and procedures throughout Centra Health. Through workflow changes and a better understanding of the billing and claims collection process, the health care system was able to expand dramatically over five years. For instance, in 2004, Centra Health leveraged athenahealth to create a Master Patient Index to interface with Centra's hospital registration system, resulting in massive operational and financial improvements across the health care system.

"Over the years our partnership with athenahealth has enabled Centra Health to expand our operation, design new ambulatory strategies, and empower us to manage what is now a sprawling regional care delivery system that touches all corners of the state," said Hall-Tweedy.



"We've grown from 20 doctors to 115 doctors in five years without an increase in support staff."

– Tammy Hall-Tweedy, RN

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At athenahealth, we know that every practice is different.

Contact us to find out how we can help you.



athenahealth

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