



SUSTAINING INDEPENDENCE

“With two collectors there was no way to get to outbound calls”

Peggy Elder-Nelson
Director, Patient Financial Services
DeKalb Health

DEKALB HEALTH AUBURN, INDIANA

DeKalb Health is a not-for-profit, acute care facility founded in 1964 through voluntary contributions from county citizens. Celebrating 50 years as an independent organization, DeKalb Health and its leadership plans for continued success in an era that requires greater efficiency and reduced costs.

SITUATION

Seeking a refined self-pay process and improved collection performance in the active accounts receivable (AR), Peggy Elder-Nelson evaluated existing vendors and looked to their McKesson system for ideas.

Having returned to DeKalb health after some time at another facility, the Director of Patient Financial Services, Peggy Elder-Nelson discovered that the existing arrangement for self-pay follow up was under performing and wondered if there were utilities within their McKesson Paragon® system that could supplement their efforts.

CHALLENGES

A dedicated self-pay follow up team of two (2) FTEs could only effectively engage a portion of patients that carried a balance past 60 days. The existing pre-collect vendor arrangement was troubled with costly manual processes, poor reporting and patient complaints.

An independent community hospital, DeKalb was on the cusp of a 50-year anniversary and celebrating continued success with support from their community. However, like many organizations that are planning for an era of lower reimbursements and narrowing margins, DeKalb needed to look at ways to improve what they had. With two dedicated resources they could not execute a strong patient outreach effort. To complicate matters, the existing pre-collect vendor required a very manual process of referring accounts and updates were not occurring frequently enough. Some patients were complaining and the arrangement was becoming more and more costly.

Elder-Nelson began to investigate a known integration with CCI inside DeKalb's Paragon system. She contacted their IT department and asked if it was on their radar and had it been considered. CCI had been discussed in the past but a system upgrade had postponed deeper exploration. Needing to act quick and shore up performance gaps in the revenue cycle, a subscriber agreement was quickly executed and implementation began immediately, a timely benefit as a result of the full integration of CCI software inside Paragon. Very little time was needed from IT and a new, fully automated strategy was in place within two weeks.

RESULTS

DeKalb Health can now deploy outbound calls to most of their patient base and has a system in place that can scale with them. Bad debt placements decreased by more than 15% in just three months. The cost to collect is already down to 5.5%.

DeKalb can now handle a larger volume of accounts with fewer staff at a lower cost and with less overhead. The fully automated strategy deploys interactive voice response calls to patients and gives them multiple opportunities to engage with hospital staff and pay their bill.

“We were up and running in two weeks. Turning CCI on was a great decision and it was so easy. I wish we had done it sooner.”

Peggy Elder-Nelson
Director, Patient Financial Services
DeKalb Health