



Hospital System's Chargemaster Team Uses CodeCorrect to Improve Efficiency and Impact the Bottom Line

Customer:

The Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati

CodeCorrect Solutions:

CDM Manager®

KnowledgeSource®

RevenueDashboard®

Results:

Moving from a manual to an automated solution, Chargemaster Services reduces the time to code and bill, and gives the team the opportunity and information needed to proactively pursue appropriate reimbursements – resulting in higher revenue capture.

With a focus on providing high-quality, cost-effective and accessible care, The Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati meets the health care needs of the Tri-state region of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. With more than 4,000 beds and 13,300 employees, the Health Alliance leads as the area's largest health system, serving the region through The Christ Hospital, The University Hospital, The St. Luke Hospitals, The Jewish Hospital, The Fort Hamilton Hospital and the physicians of Alliance Primary Care.

The Health Alliance maintains one chargemaster for the entire health care system, managing nearly 15,000 active codes. Until 2004, the hospital's Chargemaster Services department handled its coding and reimbursement using hardcopy books and the CMS Web site. To update the chargemaster, the team would manually search for new codes, and then cross-reference them against their own records.

"It was back and forth, very manual, very tedious," said Shawn Kent, Director, Chargemaster Services. "We built lots of things in spreadsheets, kind of homegrown tracking mechanisms. In such an archaic environment, we didn't have time to look proactively at other net revenue opportunities out there."

An Automated, Easy-to-Maintain Chargemaster Solution

When Kent joined as director of the department, transitioning to an automated chargemaster solution ranked high on his list of objectives. He began evaluating half a dozen solutions, but quickly eliminated some of the smaller, less established companies and products.

"We are a cutting-edge organization," Kent said. "We needed to go with the best."

Ultimately, CodeCorrect stood out for several key reasons. The Web-based model brought an ease of maintenance not available in other applications. With the ASP solution, the organization wouldn't need to invest in any new hardware or require the Information Services and Technology department to maintain it. That translated to a lower total cost of ownership, minimal maintenance and a shorter, easier implementation process. "We could flip it on and be ready to go," Kent said.

Plus, CodeCorrect offered all the functionality Kent's Chargemaster Services team wanted at an affordable price. By contrast, a competing solution would have cost the organization considerably more in terms of application, hardware and maintenance costs, and would have taken three to five weeks to bring online.

"We wanted to be a revenue-generating department and now we are one. CodeCorrect has given us the reports and capabilities to go in that direction."

~Shawn Kent, Director, Chargemaster Services, The Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati

One Source for Up-to-Date Information

The Health Alliance relies on CodeCorrect's CDM Manager® to help improve charge capture, achieve and maintain profitability, increase the percentage of clean claims, and maintain chargemaster accuracy and coding compliance.



Additionally, the department leverages CodeCorrect's KnowledgeSource® to ensure it has accurate codes so it never misses any revenue opportunities. Likewise, RevenueDashboard®, also from CodeCorrect, allows the department to evaluate and better manage its APC performance by allowing it to review and analyze the profitability of individual APCs across multiple Health Alliance departments.

With CodeCorrect, the Health Alliance successfully moved from a manual to an automated coding and reimbursement process. CodeCorrect's integrated, Web-based suite of applications has become the department's single source for up-to-date information.

The department utilizes CodeCorrect to ensure it maximizes every possible revenue opportunity. For example, the application might point out codes that most hospitals usually bill together, but aren't being billed by the Health Alliance. That kind of information prompts the organization to examine coding practices and in some cases, immediately begin collecting additional revenue.

The team also stays abreast of CMS codes – without having to resort to print publications or other Web sites. As part of their CDM Manager subscription, the department receives CodeCorrect Informants®, timely e-mail notifications which alert the organization about code changes. The team has found this value-added tool useful because each change is linked to specific chargemaster line items affected by the change. Each Informant is sent to appropriate individuals or departments, based on the codes affected. With this pro-active approach, the department immediately knows about all code changes and can forward relevant information to the right parties at the right time to facilitate swift modifications to the CDM.

According to Kent, "CodeCorrect Informants prompt us via e-mail instead of forcing us to sift through and do research."

In the past, preparing for annual price adjustments was an arduous process for the Health Alliance. The department could never be sure that their prices were optimal.

CodeCorrect accelerated this annual process by providing reports about the Alliance's fees relative to fee schedule, and pointing to areas where the organization could make changes.

"We are very confident in the pricing strategy we have now," Kent said. "By using CodeCorrect, we know now that we are optimizing the revenue associated with our annual price adjustments because it drives us to look in places we might not have looked before."

Beyond the value of the applications themselves, Kent also appreciates CodeCorrect's extraordinary level of customer service. "The level of customer service you get from CodeCorrect far exceeds the others," he said. "Our account manager bends over backwards to provide whatever training or educational materials we need."

Results: New-found Time and Resources Drive Higher Revenue Capture

With CodeCorrect, the Health Alliance has significantly reduced the time it takes to locate correct coding information. The department simply types in a key word or code, and everything it needs is there. "The amount of time it saves us is phenomenal," Kent added.

Additionally, CodeCorrect helps the Health Alliance increase revenue in two ways. Chargemaster Services more easily finds appropriate codes and optimal coding combinations. Plus, the team's time is freed to pursue additional revenue opportunities.

"Since moving to CodeCorrect, we have more time to look at areas we might not have looked at in prior years because we just didn't have time," Kent said. "That helps us meet our margin. This department has gone from being a 'back room operation' to making a significant contribution to the Health Alliance bottom line."

"We wanted to be a revenue-generating department and now we are one," Kent added. "CodeCorrect has given us the reports and capabilities to go in that direction. The results help you easily pay for the products."