

CASE STUDY

MISSION HOSPITAL

THE CHALLENGE

Mission Hospital's Patient Access and Revenue Cycle leaders recognized that in order for the hospital to reach its aggressive collections goals, the labor-intensive processes used to calculate estimates and request patient payments had to be updated.

Hospital employees used Passport IntelliSource to quickly and accurately verify patient insurance eligibility, but relied upon a manual spreadsheet to accurately calculate patients' out-of-pocket portion. There was no better way to apply chargemaster and payer contract rates.

Because the spreadsheet was designed for high-dollar and high-volume encounters, staff did not consistently collect for less common visits with a lower charge. Co-pays for lab and radiology visits were hit and miss. In the emergency department, co-pays were only collected if listed on an insurance card.

"We've always been strong in our collections, but with our volume we knew the only way to improve our results was to improve our process. It needed to be faster, more consistent and more user-friendly for patients and staff," said Joanne Richardson, Assistant Director of Patient Access for Mission Hospital.

THE SOLUTION

The first step was to automate the estimate process. Passport's **Patient Payment Estimator** (PPE) tool eliminated the need for manual spreadsheets by allowing staff to calculate estimates with just the click of a button, literally. The software automatically pulled real-time patient benefits data from IntelliSource and compared chargemaster and payer contracted rates to generate a price. What previously took employees several minutes to accomplish was reduced to a matter of seconds.

Once an estimate was given to a patient, there needed to be an immediate request for payment. Passport's **eCashiering** solution was integrated to allow front-end staff to seamlessly accept any type of payment or set up payment plans, all from the same dashboard used to verify eligibility and calculate the estimate.

These tools made the collections workflow faster and more user-friendly for patients and staff, but the need for more consistency also had to be addressed. Passport's **Registration Quality Assurance** (RQA) software was added to help managers monitor employee performance. The solution detected any data discrepancies or process errors, allowing staff to immediately correct mistakes in real time.

Mission Hospital, a 552-bed acute care facility, provides advanced healthcare services and diagnostic care to Mission Viejo and south Orange County, California. The hospital is part of the St. Joseph Health System.

THE ROI

Collections

Collections during the first quarter of 2011 averaged more than \$575,000 per month, and **point-of-service patient payments accounted for nearly 2 percent of the hospital's net revenue.** Average monthly collections increased approximately 35 percent from the best efforts prior to PPE and eCashiering.

"Does Passport help us collect more? Definitely. With PPE and eCashiering we are faster and more consistent. It has made the entire process easier for the staff and for patients, which was a goal from the beginning. We are very pleased with the results."

Accuracy and Efficiency

"With RQA we are able to hold our staff more accountable," said Richardson. "It used to be very difficult to discern who was doing their job and who needed to improve. Now we can track the information easily and recognize employees who are meeting set goals."

At one time the hospital used an incentive program to reward employees when the department achieved 99 percent or better accuracy. Since the implementation of RQA, the focus has shifted to individual performance, and **employees consistently meet the standard of 98 percent accuracy.**

The success Mission Hospital has had with its innovative collections strategy has drawn praise from St. Joseph Health System's corporate office. The organization plans to implement similar programs at all of the system's 14 ministries, using Mission Hospital as the model.



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