TransUnion Healthcare helps Parkland cut costs and streamline its systems

About Parkland

Parkland Health & Hospital System is one of the largest public hospitals in the country. The sole public hospital in Dallas County, Parkland is also the primary teaching hospital for The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Parkland’s mission is to provide care for all in need. But as a public hospital, Parkland leadership continuously works to be good stewards, ensuring efficient and effective use of public resources. In fiscal year 2011, Parkland provided $605 million in uncompensated care, compared to $468 million in patient revenue. Charity and Medicaid patients accounted for almost 70% of the hospital’s patient revenue. Approximately 20% of Parkland patients have commercial insurance or Medicare.

Therefore it is critical for Parkland staff to verify identity and eligibility up front; assess ability to qualify for financial assistance; and match patients to the appropriate funding source as quickly as possible.

Challenge: Multiple systems, high costs

Before Parkland partnered with TransUnion Healthcare, Parkland staff used disparate systems to check eligibility, verify demographics and assess ability to pay. Furthermore, none of the disparate systems integrated with the hospital’s Epic registration system. This meant the staff was spending valuable time manually entering data into three different systems. In addition, staff was dissatisfied with the system’s insurance verification solution and the quality of responses they received from insurers.

With its processes costly, cumbersome and inefficient, Parkland decided it was time to streamline and find one vendor who could manage the entire financial clearance process.

Problems with previous solutions

- Disparate systems verify insurance benefits, demographics and assess ability to pay
- Lack of integration with Epic registration system
- Manual entry into three different systems
- Unreliable insurance verification solution

Table: Streamlining the self-payer financial clearance process

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<th>PROCESS STEPS</th>
<th>Verify address and ID</th>
<th>Verify insurance eligibility</th>
<th>Propensity to Pay calculation</th>
<th>Charity/Medicaid screening</th>
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<td>CHALLENGES</td>
<td>Is patient from Dallas County? Is ID clear?</td>
<td>Does patient have insurance?</td>
<td>Does patient have a credit rating or similar evidence?</td>
<td>Is patient eligible for county charity or Medicaid?</td>
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<td>TRANSUNION HEALTHCARE SOLUTION</td>
<td>Button on Epic ADT system to launch inquiry using ID/Address Verification</td>
<td>Button on Epic ADT system to check insurance using standard 270/271 EDI process</td>
<td>Access to financial data within Epic or Revenue Manager using Financial Assessment and HL7 interface</td>
<td>Revenue Manager Interview Wizard enrollment solution is on its way</td>
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Solution: TransUnion Healthcare’s products customized to Parkland’s needs

Parkland had worked previously with TransUnion Healthcare, using its Financial Assessment batch solution to identify bad debts that could be reassessed as charity care. On the basis of this relationship and TransUnion’s experience of working closely with Epic registration systems, TransUnion Healthcare was able to expand their relationship in 2011 and implement additional systems and processes by May 2012.

TransUnion’s one-vendor solution saved Parkland $30,000 a month, helping the system remain fiscally prudent. It achieved lower costs by taking its existing products, Address Verification, Financial Assessment and Insurance Eligibility, and integrating them at the front end within Parkland’s existing Epic Prelude registration system. This allowed Parkland’s staff to maximize the workflow capabilities of the Epic System, while getting improved back-end support.

The end-to-end system can now verify patients’ IDs and addresses by launching an inquiry at the click of a button on the Epic registration system. This solution required some customization: for example, county data—crucial for assessing a Dallas County patient’s eligibility for charity financing—needed to be added into the system. Another click of a button allows staff to verify insurance eligibility using a standard 270/271 EDI process. TransUnion Healthcare was also able to help improve Parkland’s hit rate on responses from payers, using its experience in EDI transactions and individual payer response characteristics.

In an effort to deliver meaningful financial data to front end staff, TransUnion Healthcare provided a customized set-up, enabling only staff with appropriate need and permission to view financial data through Epic. A customized HL7 interface from Epic to the TransUnion Healthcare Revenue Manager Interview Wizard helps these counsellors use financial data to identify which patients they should interview for Medicaid or charity eligibility. For returning patients, the system automatically renews eligibility if they still reside in Dallas County and their financial data shows they are still at the required Federal Poverty Level—considerably speeding up administration for existing patients. With intent to further the benefits of using one product as well as realize additional cost savings, Parkland is now looking to shift its Medicaid and charity enrollment processing to TransUnion Healthcare as well.

“With the help of TransUnion Healthcare, Parkland is now where it wanted to be: its costs have decreased, its workflow efficiency has increased, and response time is faster with a lower error rate. TransUnion Healthcare offers you Intelligence in an Instant®. Contact our sales team at 1-888-791-3088 or hcsolutions@transunion.com to learn more about our very smart solutions.”

Bob Reed, Director of Patient Access at Parkland Health & Hospital System