

Case study

IHMS helps Northwest Medical Center realize a 100 percent turnaround in Medicaid collections

Situation

Verifying third-party eligibility and billing subsequent claims is difficult for hospitals that do not have the resources to visit discharged patients in their homes, collect pending documentation and provide information on social services.

This was the case at Northwest Medical Center, a 300-bed hospital in Tucson, Ariz., which faced a backlog of eligibility and recovery cases.

Solution

Integrated Health Management Systems developed a two-pronged approach to correct outstanding claims and meet the requirements of health plans in order to get the claims paid.

At the start, the IHMS team divided the caseload by health plan and assigned the newly categorized cases to collectors. The collectors then worked aging reports and sorted spreadsheets according to issues they encountered.

Doing this allowed IHMS to become an expert on each health plan, providing plan administrators and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System with detailed data needed to contract and resolve global issues. By looking closely at each case individually, IHMS also was able to see where the eligibility and recovery breakdown began at the facility level and then work with the hospital's department leaders to make improvements. Working hand-in-hand with the hospital, IHMS opened communication with designated health plans and AHCCCS, too, ensuring that all requests adhered to their guidelines and kept within facilities' contracts.

Approach

To facilitate the process, IHMS prepared all re-bills in the same way, using a specific standard for appeal letters and attachments, and elevating issues to the plans in a routine manner.

Collectors analyzed AHCCCS policies and the rights of health care providers. They also exercised Northwest Medical Center's rights by appealing inaccurate denials. If appeals were not addressed promptly, IHMS requested State Fair Hearings.

Along the way, IHMS helped health plans identify and resolve issues, making them true partners in the eligibility and recovery process.

Results

Thanks to the partnership with IHMS, Northwest Medical Center now boasts high conversion rates to AHCCCS coverage and the hospital's receivables status exceeds the corporate standard for percentage of aged claims.

IHMS continues to work with the facility to manage internal changes and issues that arise from budget and policy changes at the state Medicaid system.