

VIKINGLAND VIEWPOINT

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Salina Regional Health Center Case Study

Successful healthcare revenue cycle programs are usually the result of combining the best in technology with innovative business processes. That has been the case with 419-bed Salina Regional Health Center for 12 years.

Background

Located in Salina, Kan., a town set in the north central portion of the state, Salina Regional Health Center attracts patients from all over the state and provides care at two different campuses. Originally, Salina Regional Health Center was two different Hospitals – Asbury Hospital and St. John’s Hospital – until a merger in 1995 united both hospitals under the name for which they are now known.

In 1993, Asbury Hospital was at a crossroads with its claims management processes, according to Patient Accounts Supervisor Deanna Morgan. “Most claims were submitted by paper with Medicare and Blue Cross claims being keyed directly into those respective systems,” she said. “As a management team, we knew there were better, smarter ways to manage and submit our claims while improving our business processes at the same time.”

Technology Combines with Business Practices for Success

It was in 1993 that the Asbury Hospital Patient Accounting management team chose The SSI Group, Inc. (SSI) to provide software for claims editing and transmission. “We chose SSI because of

the quality of edits and the company’s clearinghouse which we knew would dramatically improve our claims transmission process,” Morgan said.

In 1995 when Asbury Hospital and St. John’s Hospital merged to form Salina Regional Health Center, the two patient accounting teams united. Both were familiar with SSI’s claims technology. They implemented the best of each other’s business processes to form an efficient workflow for managing the new entity’s revenue cycle.

Today, the Health Center’s A/R days are at 45 days -- the result of melding technology and workflow, according to Morgan. “Over the years, we’ve explored our options as it pertains to claims technology,” she added. “But our business processes have changed several times as we’ve responded to market and demographic changes. SSI’s software is so flexible that it has met our needs for a long time.”

Currently, Salina Regional Health Center’s billing staff is comprised of three Medicare billers, three Medicaid billers, four commercial billers and three self pay billers handling a combined 7,000 claims per month. The billing staff is responsible for billing and claims follow up through patient responsibility. This breakout is to support the following average claims percentages:

Medicare = 28.8%

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Medicaid = 15.4%

Commercial = 44.7%

Self-pay = 11.1%

“SSI’s technology has afforded us the opportunity to make changes as needed to reflect any long-term or short-term adjustments in claims volumes or workflow,” Morgan said. “We’ve also added other products throughout the years including secondary billing, remit/cash posting and claims auditing. We’re able to manage a claim from the time it’s in our hands for editing, all the way through transmission and in posting the remit. The claims management process is all inclusive with technology driving efficiency and workflow.”

In 2003, the Health Center upgraded to the SQL version of SSI’s mainstay ClickON Billing product. This upgrade not only improved patient accounting operations with improved reporting and functionality, but also helped reduce the support the Patient Accounting department required from the Health Center’s own IT staff. “SQL had an impact with stability and productivity, actually decreasing our reliance on our IT staff for system support,” Morgan added.

Customer Support Vital to Daily Operations

With software, the support provided by vendors can have an immediate impact on operations. Providing customer support in the healthcare revenue cycle sector is not only necessary during times of system issues, but should be ongoing for functions like updating edits from insurance payers or for day-to-day maintenance. This responsibility rests with SSI’s Client Services department. This department is arranged by regionalized teams based on the geographic location of clients for consistency in hours and to help with familiarity between clients and the company. Morgan’s support region falls into the Western Region where she says she receives extremely valuable and responsive support in resolving day-to-day issues and in assisting with activities like installing updates and enhancements. This responsibility rests with SSI’s Client Services department. This department is arranged by regionalized teams based on the geographic location of clients for consistency in hours and to help with familiarity between clients and the company. Morgan’s support region falls into the Western Region where she says she receives extremely valuable and responsive support in resolving day-to-day issues and in assisting with activities like installing updates and enhancements.

SSI’s Carrier Research department, part of the overall company’s Client Services department, also plays a vital role in helping Morgan to stay on top of payer changes and assisting with any new requirements. “Carrier Research provides proactive services, ensuring that we are on top of any new payer requirements and quickly implementing new edits,” she said. “It’s like we are in control of the edits and the frequency in which they are released. This is a real benefit to any business office or patient accounting department.”

Additionally, user group meetings are a key component in bridging the gap in communication between clients and vendors. SSI conducts an annual user group meeting and then follows that with state and regionalized user meetings. It’s these meetings that Morgan says have helped her understand the direction SSI is heading with its software, support and further product training.

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“Naturally, I am able to meet with the Client Services representatives in person at these meetings and build rapport with them which helps us both daily in our jobs,” Morgan said. “Then, the training and product training are invaluable parts of the user meetings as well. The long-term benefit of a user meeting can’t be measured. I look at it as an extension of the support we receive from SSI.”

Technology Pays Off

Utilizing the same claims management vendor for more than 12 years has helped Salina Regional Health Center spur new business practices by taking advantage of the software package’s flexibility, according to Morgan. “The original expense of the system and other products we’ve purchased through SSI has paid for itself time and again,” she said. “We view SSI’s software as a solid return on investment that has helped us be more efficient, stay on top of our revenue and keep our A/R days low.

“Because we are always looking at better ways to run our patient accounting department, it says a lot that we’ve been able to work with one claims vendor for so long,” Morgan continued.

About The SSI Group, Inc.

The SSI Group, Inc. is a national, diversified information technology company established in 1988. The company maintains corporate headquarters in Mobile, Ala., and branch facilities in Clearwater, Fla.; Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colo.; and Chesapeake, Va. The company has approximately 370 employees and 2,200-plus clients nationwide. SSI leads the healthcare field in claims management technology, EDI platforms and networking. ClickON technology has more than 200,000 built-in edits, delivers HIPAA-certified transactions from Claredi, is EHNAC certified and has 800 payer connections. As a testament to the company’s leadership, the company annually processes 250 million healthcare transactions through its clearinghouse and direct-to-payer submission software, amounting to approximately \$300 billion.

The company offers a wide range of provider/payer/physician services and technologies for managing the revenue cycle - claims processing (ASP/Direct/Clearinghouse), document management and business office outsourcing for paper claims. <http://www.thessigroup.com>.

HFMA Region 10 & 8 Conference

"An Event of Olympic Proportions", May 10-12, 2006 at the Canyons Resort in Park City, Utah will be an event you will not want to miss!

Your three days in the beautiful Park City area can start on Wednesday morning with a golf outing at Homestead Resort. The 'early bird' rate is only \$85 which includes lunch and there are many sponsorship options as well!

Whatever your Wednesday morning activity might be, you will want to be there for the start of the afternoon event featuring Emily Friedman, noted Independent Health Policy Analyst. Ms. Friedman will discuss the Five Close Races in health care that will affect us all, but whose outcome is too close to call:

- Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit
- Future of Medicaid
- New Government Health Policies
- Future Profile of Health Care Financial Management Ethics Challenges of our Profession

Important Deadlines are fast approaching so register Soon!!

April 10 – Early Bird Deadline for the Golf

April 14 – Early Registration Rate ends for hfma members at \$295 and \$395 for nonmembers

You can register from the brochure you received in the mail or by visiting the conference website www.hfma-region10and8.com.

After you register, please send questions for any of the three panels to discuss dealing with revenue cycle management, rural self pay issues and Medicaid to Janet Malmberg @ jmalmberg@eligibilityplus.com.

Minnesota HFMA Spring Fling

Thursday, May 18, 2005

6:00 p.m.

at Vescio's Cucina

4001 Highway 7

Minneapolis, MN 55416

(952) 920-0733



Network with other members!
Learn about HFMA opportunities!
Have Fun!
Good Food & Spirits!

Reservations due by May 5th
to Lyn Schroeder
at (952) 829-5937 ext. 4 or
E-mail: Mschroe873@aol.com

Membership Committee

The HFMA Minnesota Chapter Membership Committee, which consists of Randy Patton, Paula Nelson, Shawn O'Neill and Tara Hazlett, undertakes a variety of activities throughout the year to maintain and grow the chapter membership. Below is a summary of chapter membership initiatives for this and the upcoming chapter years.

For the chapter year to date, beginning May 1, 2005, the chapter has added 126 new members and lost 131, for a net loss of 5 members. The chapter experienced an unusually large increase in 2004, and a large number of these chose not to renew their membership in 2005. In spite of the slight decrease from 2005 to 2006, the chapter membership at the present time is significantly greater than at the end of the 2003 and 2004 chapter years, indicating a long-term upward trend.

We would like to recognize and thank the following Chapter members who have sponsored a new member during the last year:

Fred Price	William Eikost
Timothy Gronseth	Ray Costello
Eric Samide	Judith Starkey
Daniel Stone	David Brenne
Pam Wilbur	Gregg Redfield
Stanley Knobloch	Jeffery Johnson
Tammy Kritzer	Randall Patton
Dwight Thompson	Timothy Gronseth
Nancy Treacy	Leslye Herrmann
James Winch	Leslie Jo Peterson
Candace Peterson	

Remember, we as current members are often in the best position to recruit new members from our circle of colleagues and professional contacts by identifying individuals likely to benefit from HFMA and selling them on the benefits of membership.

We will kick off the Member-Get-A-Member Campaign in July. This promotion comes with prizes and a drawing to be held next May for this year's winners.

Annual dues notices are being mailed from March through April. We encourage everyone to renew promptly to continue receiving the benefits of HFMA membership.

Many of us may have been members of HFMA for some time without taking advantage of all of the opportunities for professional and career growth membership in HFMA offers. Your membership experience can be enriched by participation in chapter committees and other volunteer opportunities, attendance at the Chapter Institutes, and attendance at HFMA National conferences and seminars. We encourage you to consider Chapter volunteer opportunities and, if you haven't attended a Chapter or National conference or seminar, to attend one in the near future.

Senior Analyst / Accountant

Assist in the coordination and completion of the monthly corporate financial report with primary responsibility for the accounts receivable reserve calculation. Produce and analyze monthly financial reports for assigned departments. Responsible for monitoring and maintaining Hennepin Faculty Associate's fee schedule for patient care services. Maintain databases used for generating reports and analysis. Assist in the long-range planning and implementation process. Assist in the annual financial planning process. Perform special analysis as requested by the President and Vice President of Finance.

Contact

Ray Sailer

Hennepin Faculty Associates

914 S 8th Street

Minneapolis, MN 55404

Telephone: 612/347-5110

CFO Expansion Campaign 2006

The 2006 CFO Expansion Campaign is under way! The goal of the CFO expansion initiative is to engage former and prospective CFO members in all HFMA activities, especially HFMA membership. Many of these key relationships are built and developed locally, and it is this component we ask that you champion in your chapter.

As the fiscal year-end draws near, we want to ensure that everyone involved in HFMA membership initiatives, specifically the CFO expansion initiative, is incredibly successful! We have established a goal to acquire 140 additional CFOs by May 31, 2006. That is an average of two CFOs per chapter! To ensure success, chapter presidents

and regional executives are asked to use the tools and resources available at www.hfma.org/membershipchair when making phone calls and visiting with potential and former CFO members.

If you need any additional information or would like to obtain updated lists for recruitment and reinstatement efforts of CFO nonmembers, former members, and/or active members in your chapter, please contact Kristin Belleson, membership manager, at (800) 252-4362, ext. 302, or kbelleson@hfma.org. If you have any questions regarding the CFO expansion initiative, please feel free to contact Kristin Belleson or Steve Rauchenecker, director, membership and marketing, at (800) 252-4362, ext. 321, or smr@hfma.org.

Keep up the great work!

Calendar of Events

April

6-7	Concordia Institute, Fargo-Moorhead, ND-MN
23-26	HCCA Compliance Institute, Las Vegas, NV
24-27	HFMA Spring Seminar Series, Minneapolis, MN
24-26	National Managed Health Care Congress, Washington, DC
30-5/3	AHA Annual Meeting, Washington, DC

May

2-5	HFMA Spring Seminar Series, Kansas City, MO
7-9	Leadership Training Conference, Huntington Beach, CA
18	Minnesota Chapter Mini-LTC
18	Minnesota Chapter Spring Fling
10-12	AHILA/AHIP Law Conference, Amelia Island, FL
10-12	HFMA Region 8 & 10 Conference, Park City, UT
21-24	VHA Leadership Conference, St. Louis, MO
22-25	HFMA Spring Seminar Series, Savannah, GA

June

13-16	HFMA Spring Seminar Series, San Diego, CA
18-22	Annual National Institute, Orlando, FL
22-24	AHILA Institute on Medicare & Medicaid, Baltimore, MD

Finance Director/CFO

Appleton Area Health Services, a progressive health care organization located in next to the Lac qui Parle National Refuge and Minnesota River in beautiful south west Minnesota, is seeking qualified candidates to fill this key CFO position. AAHS is a 15 bed critical access hospital, owned family practice clinic, 70 bed nursing home, 31 congregate living apartments, and home health agency. This position is responsible for providing organizational leadership in the areas of finance, accounting, business office, information systems, payroll, accounts receivable and accounts payable. The successful candidate will also serve an important member of the senior leadership management team, reporting directly to the CEO.

A Bachelor's Degree in Finance/Accounting with 3-5 years progressive health care finance experience preferred.

A competitive compensation and benefit package is being offered. Please submit cover letter/resume via E-mail in confidence to: dswenson@mchsi.com or mail to:

CEO
Appleton Area Health Services
30 S Behl St.
Appleton, MN 56208

Web Sites for Registration

HFMA

www.hfma.org

HCCA

www.hcca-info.org

AHA

www.aha.org

NMHCC

www.nmhcc.org

ACHE

www.ache.org

MHA

www.mnhospitals.org

AHIMA

www.ahima.org

VHA

www.vha.com

AHILA

www.healthlawyers.org

Minnesota HFMA Sponsors

GOLD

Eide Bailly, LLP
LarsonAllen
RSM McGladrey
Wipfli

SILVER

Dairyland Healthcare Solutions
Deloitte & Touche, LLP
Medical Learning
The SSI Group, Inc.
Third Millenium

BRONZE

CollTech
Cymetrix



hfma

healthcare financial management association

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Responsibility for the content of Vikingland Viewpoint lies solely with the Chapter's Communications Committee. The Editor welcomes and encourages the submission of material for publication. Articles should be mailed CDROM or e-mailed in Microsoft Word or ASCII text formats and may include a short biography of the author. The Communications Committee reserves the right to edit material and to accept or reject contributions, whether solicited or not.

Opinions expressed in Vikingland Viewpoint are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Communications Committee, HFMA Minnesota Chapter Leadership, or the members of the Minnesota Chapter. Any questions or comments may be directed to the Editor at the above address:

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