



Hand Therapy

of Greater Binghamton

Hand Therapy Receives Medicare Patients' Eligibility Status Instantly with ABILITY Now and ABILITY Choice

Johnson City, New York-based Hand Therapy of Greater Binghamton now receives Medicare eligibility status instantaneously and reimbursement within 14 days, thanks to its adoption and use of ABILITY CHOICE—Medicare claims and eligibility solutions. Having a “flawless” system in place has helped Hand Therapy focus on its number one priority—the patients.

Hand Therapy is a Durable Medical Equipment (DME) organization. Its experts, Certified Hand Therapists (CHTs) deliver occupational therapy and specialize in upper extremity and hands to an annual average of 750 patients. A number of its patients depend on Medicare for coverage.

Opportunity

Providers like Hand Therapy of Greater Binghamton depend on an instantaneous system to check Medicare eligibility and submit claims. Patients can often go months without realizing that their therapy session wasn't covered by Medicare, finding that they have to pay out of pocket for those costs. Worse care scenarios for such providers can prohibit them from receiving reimbursement, leading to a minimized cash flow for the organization.

According to Rita Knopick, Hand Therapy's Office Manager, time was always an issue with their previous dial-up system. Hand Therapy first invested in a sufficient, dial-up system to submit claims and check eligibility, but the limitations immediately began to surface, said Knopick. "I always dealt with a slow connection, and was often disconnected from the system," she says. "Often there would be times in which Medicare did not receive my Medicare Part B claims, and I didn't know that was the case until I called to follow up with them."

Prior to ABILITY, Hand Therapy did not have a process for verifying patient eligibility. Knopick would spend as much as three hours a week on the phone with a Medicare representative discussing a patient's claim status or eligibility, or troubleshooting the process of submission. Not only was this time consuming, but it also slowed the reimbursement process for Hand Therapy. Knopick said patients not eligible could cost the facility at least \$300 per week.

“ABILITY provides excellent customer support and will be there when you need them to be.”

Office Manager, Rita Knopick

Implementation

Hand Therapy launched its partnership with what is now ABILITY in May 2009, emerging as a user of ABILITY CHOICE—Medicare claims and eligibility solutions. Hand Therapy also utilizes ABILITY's DME connection, ABILITY Now, for access to CSI. The implementation process was flawless and the staff found that there was no learning curve—a one hundred percent, smooth transition to the new ABILITY system.

Several times a week, Hand Therapy turns to ABILITY CHOICE Eligibility to check whether or not a patient qualifies for coverage, as well as ABILITY's Choice Claims to submit patient claims. With ABILITY's quick and efficient solutions, staff found that they could spend more time focused on patients and less on figuring out Medicare logistics. Knopick further noted that she originally received a choice between ABILITY and IVANS DME connections, and chose ABILITY. "ABILITY is more reliable," she said.

Since ABILITY CHOICE provides send and receive options, Hand Therapy receives instant electronic verification that Medicare has successfully received their claims. Hand Therapy can find out if there were problems with the claims and resubmit almost instantly, leading to a quicker reimbursement process and stable cash flow.

Implementation

Great customer service: “ABILITY provides excellent customer support, and will be there when you need them to be,” says Knopick.

Time savings: “I used to spend hours on the phone speaking with a Medicare representative about a patient’s claims,” says Knopick. “Now I can do all of this in a few hours a week, 30 minutes at most each time, ultimately saving me time to work on other projects.”

Accelerated payment: Hand Therapy typically receives Medicare reimbursement within 14 days—far less than the average experienced by organizations utilizing other Medicare solutions.

Reliability: Not as many claims rejected. “If the claims are rejected it’s usually a human error, and we know right away,” says Knopick.

Immediacy: Hand Therapy receives immediate feedback on claims status, giving the organization plenty of time to make corrections and resubmit claims, while preventing any hold in the reimbursement process.

Affordability: Hand Therapy appreciates ABILITY’s low annual licensing fees, allowing small organizations to justify the purchase of ABILITY CHOICE because of its value.

Mission: According to Knopick, “ABILITY’s solutions support small organizations who focus on their number one priority first and foremost—their patients.”

Flexibility: ABILITY’s solutions works flawlessly with Hand Therapy’s selection of an electronic medical record (EMR) vendor and hopes to one day see an integration of a software vendor and its attachment of the billing to the EMR.



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About ABILITY

ABILITY works to save lives by facilitating information exchange and knowledge sharing among every participant within the healthcare spectrum – hospitals, physician practices, home care providers, DMEs, and private and government payers. More than 3,000 hospitals across the country use ABILITY network to promote care coordination and collaboration, reduce record fragmentation, participate in new care models, streamline administrative workflow and access the Direct Project network and state and community-based Health Information Exchanges.