



Hospice of Southern West Virginia

Medicare Direct Data Entry Simplified, Streamlined with ABILITY EASE

Serving the needs of individuals suffering from life-limiting illnesses and those caring for them, Hospice of Southern West Virginia is available to patients in Fayette, Raleigh, Summers and Wyoming Counties. The agency works with a population of Medicare patients of about 150. Looking to streamline its claims process and reduce rejections with Medicare and provide more accurate data for their own agency as well as others, the facility extended its two-year relationship with ABILITY Network in 2011. By implementing and utilizing the ABILITY EASE for Hospice product Hospice of Southern West Virginia was able to automate the time-consuming Medicare DDE (Direct Data Entry) process.

Opportunity

Prior to installing ABILITY EASE, the agency was experiencing issues determining the election periods for its Medicare patients. Previously, the billing department for Hospice of Southern West Virginia maintained records on paper, creating a slowed workflow and election periods inconsistent with Medicare records. Furthermore, the correct election period of transfer patients was unknown to the agency, leading to frustrating rejections from Medicare. On average, the agency had 15-25 patients with rejected claims because their previous benefit period was unknown resulting in additional correction work by the billing department and delayed reimbursement.

Carolyn Anderson, Billing Clerk, explained, "After purchasing ABILITY EASE, I was playing around with the system, and I realized that this capability would solve some of the rejections we were previously experiencing from Medicare related to inaccurate election periods."

Implementation

In May 2011, Carolyn realized how ABILITY EASE would lower the number of rejections, provide information to create cleaner claims and improve their bottom line. The senior leadership team explored the product through a handful of in-depth demonstrations, and they chose to implement the product soon after. Staff received training via ABILITY EASE webinars once a week for the subsequent three to four weeks, and the go-live was launched smoothly after only a few weeks. Immediate results highlighted time and money-saving benefits, a more streamlined workflow and claims process, and a decrease in the amount of claims rejections.

"Once I reviewed it with them, our leadership team was very impressed with ABILITY EASE's usability, reports, and email notifications, in particular the notification that Medicare is direct depositing money in our bank account."

“This has proved to be very valuable to that team because the product can generate reports that can be provided to the Board of Directors.”

Carolyn Anderson, Billing Clerk, Hospice of Southern West Virginia

Results

With the use of ABILITY EASE, the staff at Hospice of Southern West Virginia is able to automate time-consuming Medicare claims and receive daily reports showing the status of Medicare revenue. According to Carolyn, “What used to take me several days in DDE/FISS checking claims status, now can be completed in a couple of hours.” Carolyn also cites that they have less write-offs because they can easily access patient eligibility information before admittance and have a comprehensive patient view during a patient’s entire benefit period alerting them of any changes that may affect reimbursement. Furthermore, the affordability of the product allows the agency to experience substantial financial benefits that are recognized and appreciated by the leadership team. Additional capabilities Carolyn has enjoyed include the face-to-face interaction notifications so that she is made aware when a face-to-face physician encounter is required.

“The face-to-face notification is very helpful,” said Carolyn. “The patient care coordinator makes sure that the doctor gets what he/she needs, she goes out to see the patient and does her assessment, and the coordinator goes into the system and updates all the information. It’s really been a very helpful tool by minimizing kick-outs.”

Lessons Learned

From the selection, implementation and user experiences, Carolyn has developed a handful of helpful tips she feels are important to other companies in similar situations that are exploring vendor and product opportunities for their Medicare claims. Among them:

- Focus on product reliability and accuracy in the selection process.
- Be vocal about the benefits of a new product with your team and explain how it helps solve problems specific to your organization.
- Get the leadership team involved in the selection process by educating them on the product benefits and highlighting specific problem solvers such as reporting capabilities and workflow enhancements.
- Utilize training webinars and resources to the fullest extent. “We are still utilizing the training webinars,” said Carolyn. “Every time a new one comes up, we sign up for it because we know we will receive valuable information and learn something we did not know before.”



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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.