BACKGROUND

Brevard Physician Associates (BPA) is a physician-owned and operated complex medical specialty group located in Melbourne Florida, comprised of over 150 physicians in Anesthesiology, Emergency Medicine and Radiology, with advanced level practitioners including Physician Assistants, Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists and Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants formed in October 2013. The group supports four hospitals, several Ambulatory Surgery Centers, and free-standing diagnostic imaging centers.

BPA had been working with a nationally recognized revenue cycle management (RCM) provider when performance issues, such as coding backlogs and not billing for medical direction, were identified. These issues were compounded by prolonged requests for reporting and analytics updates, vendor silos impacting communication, the use of several different IT platforms and poor customer service to the patient base (which of course includes an aging population).

As the group struggled with consistent billing and coding issues and poor performance of the national RCM provider, the leadership of Brevard Physician Associates (BPA), with the concurrence of the practice's physicians, began the process of seeking a new billing company.

SEARCH PROCESS

In a national search, BPA conducted multiple interviews, on-site meetings and presentations and extensive reference checks with several nationally recognized revenue cycle management companies. The focus of the search went beyond the immediate need to address the coding backlog and billing for medical direction, but to also include customer service, reporting and data analytics, proven coding capabilities and processes, technological capabilities, and company leadership and vision. It was also important that the next company providing RCM services could offer the flexibility needed to work with the group's onsite staff in the Florida office, to maintain their internal lockbox, obtain a single platform for reporting, and the ability to customize to their practice, system & deliverables. The group, at one point, also considered managing their billing in-house, but ultimately decided the flexibility and reporting services available through outsourcing, would provide a more time and cost-effective choice for the practice.

THE SOLUTION

AdvantEdge Healthcare Solutions (AdvantEdge) proposed a comprehensive and accountable revenue cycle management program tailored to meet the needs of BPA, immediately correcting the coding backlog and medical direction billing issues. The solution offered also took into account the specific needs of BPA in anticipation of future practice growth with proven billing and coding processes and technology, reporting analytics with AdvantEdge Analytics (A2), ClientFirst[SM] Service and open-access to AdvantEdge leadership.

IMPLEMENTATION

AdvantEdge deployed its tailored implementation process and, in collaboration with BPA, successfully transitioned the account in 90 days. The customized plan included a thorough review of all the various aspects of the practice's system interface setup and testing, provider enrollment, banking setup, and detailed workflows including documentation and coding feedback, refund processing, fee schedules, payer contracts, collection agency, etc. The process also established reporting customized to the group's needs with AdvantEdge Analytics 24/7, anytime anywhere dashboard access.

Throughout implementation, BPA leadership and staff joined AdvantEdge's weekly team meetings during which status details and current progress were reviewed and discussed. These weekly calls established a mechanism for AdvantEdge to become more familiar with the group's onsite operations and review current progress, as well as provided increased transparency so that BPA remained up-to-date and could be confident that the implementation plan and schedule were on track, running smoothly and meeting their expectations.

During the implementation process, the client and AdvantEdge collaboratively identified several unmet needs and previously unknown issues that required immediate resolution. One of which was the need to track scribes for its two emergency department (ED) divisions. AdvantEdge was able to create a tracking solution and a tracking report in under 24 hrs, which was demonstrated the following day during the implementation meeting.

It was also found that BPA was experiencing significant lag with charge entry in its radiology department due to coding issues with its previous RCM provider – often up to 30 days! AdvantEdge's coding team resolved these issues and eliminated unacceptable lag-times.

To address the client's ED Log Reconciliation requirements, AdvantEdge created an application that loads data from incoming ASCII ED log files into a custom ED Reconciliation file on its processing system. A series of programs were then created to match up ED Reconciliation file data with other files in Virtual Manager, AdvantEdge's proprietary software platform, to pull information into the ED Reconciliation file. By automating routine tasks, Virtual Manager allows the AdvantEdge team to quickly communicate and respond to changes in payer rules, regulations, etc., and also creates additional time for billing staff to work on difficult denials and AR follow-up.

The client reported that entire sections were often found to be missing from Accession Logs while working with the previous RCM provider, who was unable to provide a method to reconcile the missing data. In addressing the data issue as well as standard Accession Log Reconciliation requirements for Radiology, an application was created which loads data from BPA Radiology log files into a custom Radiology Reconciliation file on Virtual Manager [or "AdvantEdge's processing system"]. An InfoEdge BI cube was also created to activate the Radiology Accession Reconciliation file data for reporting purposes. These reports are now run at the end of each month and continue to identify and resolve lost billable events.

RESULTS

These custom designed applications and implementations have resulted in significant savings, for the physician group, of both time and revenue. BPA's decision to outsource RCM services and work directly with AdvantEdge's team of coding and billing experts has resulted in an increase in GCR for ED South of 10.5%, and an increase of 8.3% for ED North. Patient collections increased an average of $27.50 per patient, in both locations, and AR over 120 days dropped from an average of 21.9% to 15.35%. Payments per anesthesia case saw an increase from $459.68 to $490.67 or $31 per case. The substantial lag in radiology coding was significantly decreased from 30 days, down to 3-4 days.

Dr. Aaron Hattaway Chief Financial Officer for BPA and Chairman of the Radiology Division at BPA says,

"We are very pleased with our decision to switch to AdvantEdge for revenue cycle management services. The staff's level of expertise and responsiveness to our organization's needs has identified and corrected several issues created by our last RCM provider. With AdvantEdge we have seen improvements across the board. The customized, streamlined services provide us with more time to focus on our practice and spend more time with our patients."

To contact AdvantEdge Healthcare Solutions for information about revenue cycle management services, call **877-501-1611** or email **info@ahsrcm.com**