

# NEW TECHNOLOGY = INCREASED PROFITABILITY

## RADIOLOGY PRACTICE CASE STUDY

Catawba Radiological Associates, located in Hickory, NC, had a long-standing reputation as a successful practice, so when Dean Doucette first became the new practice administrator, he hoped merely to continue the tradition. After reviewing opportunities for performance improvement in billing and collections, Dean recommended moving to a practice management system offering numerous advances in technology, including sophisticated claims editing, document scanning/management, facilitated coding, flexible management reporting and real-time productivity monitoring. While many of these features had become available in older platforms as third-party add-on features, IMAGINeradiology offered all of them in the core system.

A 15-physician practice, Catawba covers three hospitals, two outpatient clinics, one PET/CT center and 47 clinics. The complexity of the practice was a consideration, since it meant acquiring data for well over 200,000 studies per year—and in different formats from the various sites. In the “old days,” this often meant dedicating one or more staff members to the task of sorting and matching demographic information to radiology reports. (The issue of missing radiology reports—which represent missing revenue—is a common concern for virtually all radiology practices and a time-consuming, less than perfect manual process to manage.)

IMAGINeradiology automated the front-end processes, matching electronic files when available, but allowing for the option to scan and match hard copy information as well. A process that could previously take days was accomplished in hours, with an editing feature that allowed for the immediate identification of missing reports and/or demographics. Not only was the quality of the charge capture process improved, but charges were ready in record time for coding and entry.

Each process in the billing/collections cycle benefited equally from technology, including:

- Automated payment posting
- Prioritization and tracking of insurance claim and private pay follow-up
- Efficient HIPAA-compliant electronic transactions, resulting in improved cash flow

Dean effectively utilized key productivity management features of the system as well. IMAGINeradiology allowed for real-time monitoring of productivity in each area, so at 1:30 p.m., for example, it is possible to see:

- How much has been posted in charges and payments (and by whom)
- How many insurance claims have been followed up by each representative
- The number of charges remaining to be coded and/or entered
- Electronic claims and statements ready for release
- Claims with missing/incorrect information to be corrected prior to release

While operational improvements are impressive, the proof is in the results. Catawba was able to take on an additional hospital site without increasing staff, net collections improved, and “days in A/R” decreased by 10 percent. In less than one year, Catawba increased revenue by nearly 20 percent.

When asked about the most significant improvements delivered by IMAGINeradiology, Dean said, “We have been impressed by the effectiveness of the system, the ease of navigation, and the ability to track collections better so we can see where discrepancies lay.” He also noted efficiencies from all activity being captured in one patient account, even if different payers are involved. “The bottom line is improved income, as well as an improved net collection percentage,” he said.



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