Improve revenue cycle processes with key technology investments: 5 thoughts

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Revenue cycle processes can break down quickly with a simple mistake or someone forgetting to get the right information at the right time. Understanding where these bottlenecks occur and the points at which a process breaks down can help healthcare organizations collect revenue efficiently and provide a more streamlined experience for the patient.

During a recent webinar, two healthcare industry experts discussed the challenges in revenue cycle management as well as how technology can help, particularly in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in many revenue cycle offices operating virtually. The presenters included:

**Paul Buonopane**  
Performance improvement expert at Digital Intelligence firm ABBYY

**Prashant Karamchandani**  
Director of healthcare advisory firm The Chartis Group
Here are five notes from the discussion:
Revenue cycle processes in healthcare are inherently complex, Mr. Buonopane said. He estimates that it takes eight to nine steps on average to move from creating a patient account to getting paid for a claim, and at some health systems that figure can jump to nearly 300. The various vendors and systems that are needed to operate revenue cycle processes add to the complexity.

“It creates a giant spaghetti mess,” said Mr. Buonopane. “And creates very low visibility into the true health of a revenue cycle.”
Though the tools and technology exist to help manage revenue cycle processes, organizations can get bogged down by the trove of data and analytics they provide, said Mr. Karamchandani. Additionally, there is more scrutiny over margin management amid the COVID-19 pandemic as hospitals look to recover revenue lost. Organizations are laser-focused on capturing every dollar and reducing rework.
Data analytics tools can’t always tell you where exactly a revenue cycle process broke down and why Mr. Karamchandani said. And with the pandemic forcing revenue cycle teams to work remotely, leaders are finding it harder to find the root causes of process issues and fix them.

“Getting that root cause information as soon as possible is the way you flip this and become very proactive in addressing these issues and making sure the solutions being put into place are actually solving the problem,” said Mr. Karamchandani.
Data required for revenue cycle processes are spread out across various systems and dashboards, making it hard for organization leaders to gain insight into processes, Mr. Buonopane said. Traditional approaches to revenue cycle process management involve dashboards that show you different pieces of the process, but those need to be strung together to get the “how” and the “why” behind any breakdowns in the process.
And solutions such as ABBYY’s Process Intelligence platform can help. The ABBYY platform gathers relevant data from the different systems and reconstructs processes automatically, exactly as they were performed. Gaining this full picture of revenue cycle processes allows organizations to determine how a process is being conducted and whether staff is complying with protocols. The solution does not require any technical coding skills, but gives organizations the ability to examine processes, ask detailed questions and get answers, he said.
Discover the truth about your process flow and performance.

Knowing how processes work and where they can be automated effectively with smarter technologies is what we call Process Intelligence. Unlike traditional business intelligence and process mining approaches, Process Intelligence offers an extremely effective way for an organization to locate inefficiencies, wasted time, bottlenecks, and any other issues that are plaguing the process, so automation can then be applied where it will have the greatest impact.
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