

How to Solve Front End Challenges: a Strong Outsourcing Strategy Improves Accuracy, Revenue, and Patient Satisfaction

Introduction

A multi-specialty surgery center in Nevada aimed to provide safe, satisfying, and positive care to every patient while strengthening the financial stability of the revenue cycle. The independently and privately owned ASC offered outpatient specialties ranging from gastroenterology, pain management, ophthalmology, orthopedic surgery, podiatry, neurological surgery, urology, and general surgery. Board members were not satisfied with their current RCM provider and looked for a new outsourcing solution.

After researching medical billing companies online, board members contacted nimble due to the company's established surgical RCM expertise in the ASC industry, as well as compliance, coding, and billing for HWW (Hospital Without Walls), and access to specialized regulatory affairs resources.

The board chose nimble for front-end processing and full RCM services after audit findings determined human error and poor follow up caused an unreliable turnaround time for claim submissions. Outstanding balances and delayed payments resulted in missed revenue opportunities and inaccurate reporting. A lack of patient visibility and inability to provide patient estimates drove a suboptimal patient experience.

Challenge

The stakeholders for the multi-specialty ASC contacted nimble at a time when they were experiencing high turnover rates among staff members. High turnover coupled with the facility's manual process for capturing patient demographics, verifying insurance and pre-authorizing procedures affected the accuracy of the revenue cycle.

On the front-end, manual entries resulted in errors that caused multiple claim issues, and staff received little to no input from their RCM outsourcing provider to address or avoid common mistakes. These errors caused false claim denials and inaccurate medical bills for patients.

On the back-end, the facility's RCM provider averaged eight business days to submit claims. Since the industry standard for claim submission is three business days or less from date of service, extended turnaround times resulted in payment delays and payment posting errors. Lack of communication and follow up between in-house staff and outsource teams led to outstanding claims, delayed collections, and credit balances. In some instances, this resulted in a six-month delay on payment.

Primary A/R Issues That Prevented Claim Resolution Included:

- Demographic errors
- Documentation requested but never sent
- Above average days to bill
- Insufficient follow-up
- Requested appeal never sent

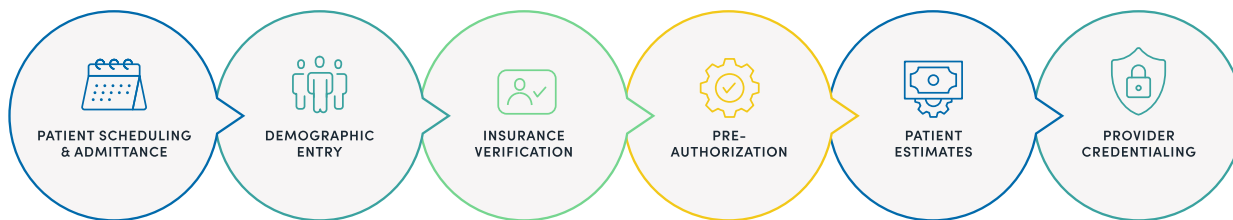
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Solution

To improve the efficiency of front-end processes, nimble advised ASC stakeholders to provide a patient registration packet online. Allowing patients to complete demographic and insurance information ahead of time cut down on errors and streamlined the data entry process. Front desk staff were trained to review the packet with patients upon arrival to verify accuracy before sending the information to nimble's NMConnect portal, where nimble's team took charge of the patient registration process.

"nimble's **boutique-like approach to customer service** includes accuracy, convenience, and communication."

ASC Administrator



Trustworthy expertise, transparency, and consistent communication were at the forefront of nimble's front-end operations. Patients knew their financial responsibility ahead of time, which was not offered by the ASC prior to nimble's partnership. nimble also provided training for ASC staff members to assist in improving patient satisfaction whenever payments were made at the facility in-person.

nimble streamlined the ASC's front-end workflow by providing:

- Demographic entry, verification of patient information and insurance eligibility;
- Price estimates to patients via text message or email at least 24 hours prior to the next date of service;
- Alerts for ASC management about any factors that may delay a procedure, such as prior authorization;
- A dedicated phone line for patients to call nimble with any questions regarding price estimates or insurance coverage;
- 24/7 access for patients to receive quotes and payment options over the phone;
- Financial counseling and payment options for patients, including setting up deferred payment plans in three equal installments or referring a third party partner for larger payment amounts;
- A daily report to the ASC that includes a highlight of high dollar cases, plus each case's cost and potential reimbursement to indicate if a case will be profitable based on pre-existing contracted rates.

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Benefits

Accuracy on the front-end set the revenue cycle up for success and improved patient satisfaction in the process. Patients came prepared with pre-appointment paperwork and spent less time in the waiting room filling out forms.

Since insurance was verified ahead of time, the patient's bill for service accurately reflected the estimate. Patients knew what to expect upon arrival, and how much their procedure would cost. When patients were aware of their responsibility ahead of time, they were more prepared to pay on time, thus improving the timeliness of patient collections.

Providing convenient customer service around the clock also increased the ASC's standing in the community as a leader in patient satisfaction. By outsourcing front-end processes and full RCM to nimble, the ASC was able to utilize their in-house personnel more efficiently by reallocating team members to other critical areas, such as scheduling more surgeries to increase revenue.

Greater accuracy decreased front-end related rejections, as well as back-end denials related to demographic or authorization errors. nimble's expertise in multi-specialty surgical coding and billing also significantly increased the rate of clean claim submissions.

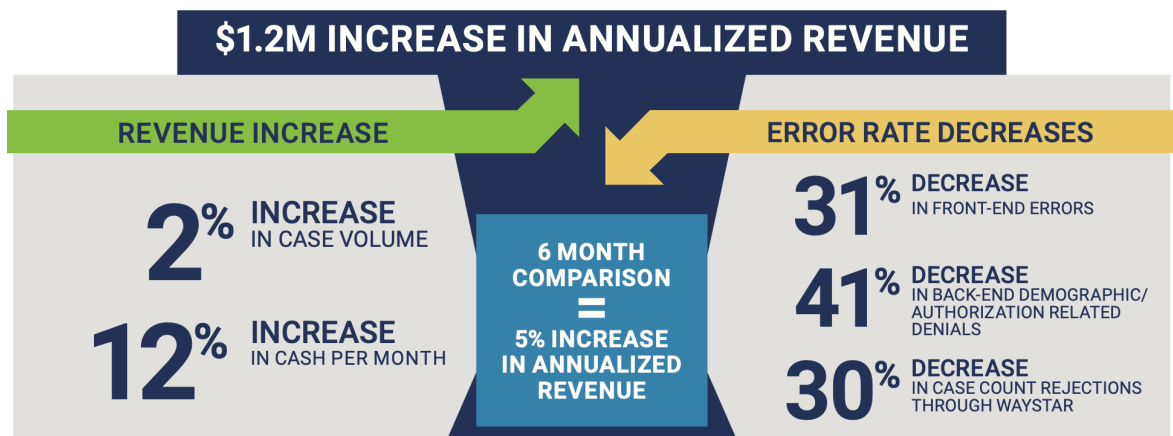
A deep understanding of managed care contract methodology kept the surgery center compliant and maximized all reimbursement opportunities. Claims were coded correctly and submitted on time, without demographic or authorization errors, thus eliminating previous claim issues that contributed to revenue cycle delays. Expedited follow-up procedures in A/R bridged the gap between posted payments and outstanding balances, and the overall turnaround of the revenue cycle improved exponentially.

"Patients have commented on **how easy the process is** and appreciate the fact that they always have someone available to answer their questions."

Chief Nursing Officer

Results

To measure the financial success of nimble's outsourcing partnership, a six-month comparison was made based on the volume of front-end related rejections and backend denials related to demographic or authorization errors. Data was pulled from January 2021 to July 2021, a six-month period prior to nimble's front-end services, and compared to the same six-month timeframe, from January 2022 to July 2022, when nimble's partnership was established.



Conclusion

Across nearly every industry nationwide, staffing shortages are negatively impacting the quality and consistency of customer service. This includes the healthcare industry as a whole, which struggles with the growing expenses associated with recruiting and retaining employees. Automating and outsourcing front-end operations can decrease the need to hire staff members with extensive knowledge of the revenue cycle.

Automation and outsourcing also reduce the likelihood of human error, claim rejections and denials when compared to results from manually entering patient demographics. Plus, front-end automation and outsourcing provide more opportunities for staff members to focus on activities that generate revenue for ASCs.

Every surgery center's revenue cycle is tied to the patient experience. Improving front-end processes will improve the overall efficiency of the revenue cycle and increase patient visibility simultaneously. By providing timely insurance verification and patient estimates, surgery centers can manage each patient's payment expectations and improve the overall patient experience.

At nimble, every decision we make is focused on one principle: achieving industry leading financial results for our clients. We significantly enhance the financial performance of our clients, and as a result, we have the highest client satisfaction rates in the RCM industry.

We invest heavily in our people, our processes, our technology, our infrastructure, and our industry research to help our clients achieve excellence in their business operations. However, our continued success is tied to our clients' success; nimble's customer centric approach benefits our clients and allows them to create the ultimate patient experience.

"We are very happy with the front-end services that nimble provides to our surgery center and our patients. nimble handles our insurance verification, patient estimates and they notify us when an authorization is required for surgery. **Having them handle all of this has made our lives easier and they are always available**—I mean even after normal business hours—I can always get a hold of someone if I have questions."

ASC Administrator

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Begin Your Revenue Cycle Management Transformation

Ask to see how our transcription, coding, and chart management software solutions can streamline your revenue cycle management.

In an RCM assessment, our experts perform a comprehensive overview of your revenue cycle, helping you answer tough questions that identify areas of financial improvement.

Our team can help you elevate:

- Managed care contracting
- Coding and billing practices
- Claims management
- Accounts receivable follow-up
- Document management, financial reporting & analysis

About nimble solutions

nimble solutions is a leading provider of revenue cycle management solutions for ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs), surgical clinics, surgical hospitals, and anesthesia groups. Our tech-enabled solutions allow surgical organizations to streamline their revenue cycle processes, reduce administrative burden, and improve financial outcomes. Join more than 1,100 surgical organizations who trust nimble solutions and its advisors to bring deep insights and actionable intelligence to maximize their revenue cycle.

Put nimble solutions to the test



Ask to see how revenue cycle solutions can streamline your patient experience and improve your finances.

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