

Executive Health Resources

Improving quality measures through Physician Documentation Service

The leadership at a rural 300+ bed hospital in the South determined that the clinical documentation supporting its inpatient cases did not accurately represent patient disease states, and was resulting in an artificially low case mix index (CMI), lower severity of illness (SOI), and a higher risk of mortality (ROM). In addition to reducing hospital reimbursement for its cases, this documentation shortcoming made it appear as if the hospital's physicians required more time and resources to treat their patients.

The hospital recognized the need to work with its treating physicians to improve the clarity and specificity of clinical documentation, but like many facilities, it faced challenges with physician engagement. The hospital needed a practical solution that would successfully improve documentation and enable a true measure of its CMI, SOI, and ROM.

At that point, the director of case management turned to Physician Documentation Service (PDS) from Optum Executive Health Resources. Through simple interactions with treating physicians regarding their concurrent cases, Optum provided case-specific education to more clearly specify disease states and co-morbid conditions.

PDS has exceeded our expectations, with improvements of 19.7% in CMI, 15.4% in SOI, and 16.5% in ROM.

"PDS has exceeded the expectations we had of the program," says the director of case management. In the first two months, the specificity of the facility's physician documentation elevated dramatically, resulting in more precise coding that directly increased the facility's case mix index by 19.7%, while its SOI rose 15.4% and its ROM improved by 16.5%. Since its launch at the hospital, PDS has resulted in a total revenue impact of \$670,000, over a 2:1 return on investment.

In the first two months, the client experienced:

- 19.7% increase in CMI
 - 15.4% increase in SOI
 - 16.5% improvement in ROM
 - Increased physician engagement with CDI
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These impressive results can be attributed to a shift in physician attitudes towards documentation. Whereas treating physicians previously did not focus as much time on their documentation habits, now the client has seen meaningful progress in terms of physician engagement with CDI efforts.

“Our physicians increasingly understand the importance of documentation and the use of specific diagnoses,” reports the hospital’s medical director.

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- Hospital Medical Director

As a result, the client has reaped benefits beyond CDI and quality measures. “PDS is having a positive effect on our medical

necessity determinations, too,” reports the director of case management.

“With more complete documentation to start with, our case managers are having an easier time identifying cases as inpatient.”

Successful CDI depends upon aligning all members of the hospital team – especially treating physicians – so that all recognize the importance of precise documentation. By successfully addressing this challenge, the client hospital dramatically improved quality measures and generated additional revenue to help the organization fund its continued mission of extending quality care to all members of its community.

Learn more about our services and the advantages clients have gained by leveraging Optum Executive Health Resources.

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