

Ambulatory Foot & Ankle Center Reduces Costs, Maintains Excellent Performance and Adopts Advanced Web-based System with SI Healthcare Management

Highlights

- SI Healthcare transitioned the practice onto a new web-based practice management system on sixty days notice. SI Healthcare assisted the practice in working with the EMR vendor to integrate with the new web-based system. The total upfront cost for the practice was only \$1000.
- SI Healthcare worked closely with the AFAC team to maintain excellent billing results. The AFAC team continued to perform demographics and charge entry while SI Healthcare took over the billing. The AR > 90 days has remained < 5%.
- While the office remains involved in assisting to make collection phone calls and deal with patient concerns, AFAC avoided hiring its own billing person at a cost of \$50,000 or more including benefits. Now the practice pays a lower monthly fee to SI Healthcare. The net result is savings of \$1460 per month, or \$17,520 annually. The investment in additional hardware such as a card scanner was minimal compared to the payoff.
- AFAC gained access to completely integrated tools that continue the ability to make automated patient reminder calls and allows automated patient insurance eligibility checking.



Challenges

Ambulatory Foot & Ankle Center (AFAC) is a two provider practice based in Silver Spring, Maryland. The owner of the practice, Dr. David Freedman, has served the community for over 20 years. The facility averages 30 to 35 visits per day for routine office visits and surgeries. As a leader in both clinical and practice management trends, Dr. Freedman manages a very efficient and effective practice resulting in solid collections and AR > 90 days of less than 5%.

However, the practice faced an ongoing challenge to find skilled billing personnel at a reasonable cost. Also, Dr. Freedman wanted to continue using his existing EMR.

Dr. Freedman decided to interview outside billing firms and selected SI Healthcare as his vendor.

Solutions

As with any practice, AFAC needed to adapt its billing systems and practices. The current practice management system was client-server based and dated. Updating or changing to another system would have required an up-front investment of at least \$15,000 and potentially much more. Then annual maintenance and IT expenses would run at least another 15% of the upfront cost. A number of "hidden costs" such as VPN license fees and custom report fees plus the ongoing costs of stitching various technologies together further raised the annual costs.

SI Healthcare introduced a service offering that included a highly advanced, web-based practice management system. Besides scheduling and reporting capabilities, the system provides integrated and automated eligibility checking, simple reports to identify missed charges, and the option to seamlessly integrate (over the Web) to a patient appointment reminder service.

The transition to the new system was assisted by SI Healthcare who worked with the AFAC team to migrate the existing demographics data into the new system. SI provided training and coaching for Dr. Freedman and the staff as well as ongoing Tier 1 support in use of the system. At the same time, SI assisted in creating the ability for ongoing downloads of patient data into Eclipsys/MedinotesE EHR.

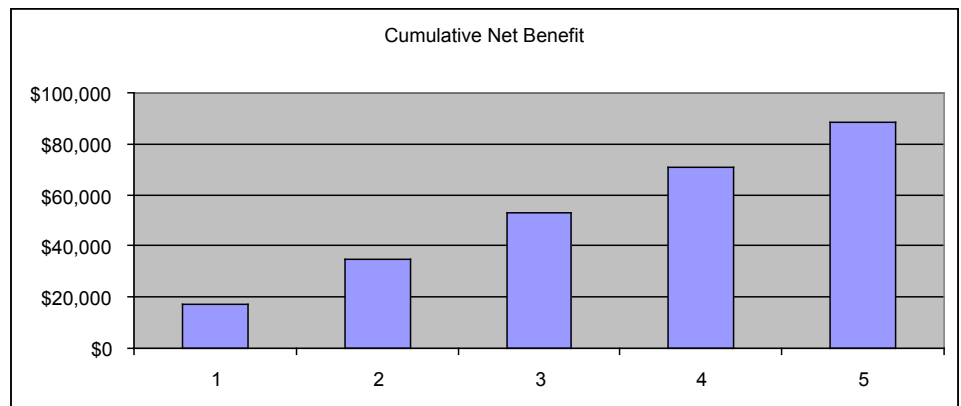
AFAC is located outside of Washington, DC where the practice would easily spend \$50,000 for a single billing person once benefits, office space, and equipment are included. Perhaps more daunting was recruiting the billing staff, training them, and maintaining them over time. As a provider involved in numerous specialty leadership activities, Dr. Freedman needed to free up his management time.

SI Healthcare took over responsibility for billing during a sixty day transition period. Now SI reviews claims entered by the office, scrubs them with a claims scrubber and transmits them to payers. SI then posts payments, manages denials and follows up on unpaid claims. SI also sends the patient statements, takes inbound patient billing calls, and makes outbound calls to patients with large balances.

Results

SI Healthcare has given AFAC bottom-line results. Starting in the first year, AFAC expects to save close to \$17,520 per year. In a difficult reimbursement market, that is a significant savings that in total will amount to \$87,600 over the 5-year horizon.

The savings alone would not have justified the move to SI Healthcare if performance was not maintained. But working together, AFAC and SI have maintained AR > 90 days at < 5% and days-in-AR of < 35 days.



About AFAC

Ambulatory Foot & Ankle Center is a two provider practice based in Silver Spring, MD outside of Washington, D.C.

About SI Healthcare

SI Healthcare provides medical coding and billing services to physicians in sixteen states using state-of-the-art billing systems and EMRs. To learn more, visit www.SIHealthManagement.com or email Healthcare.Info@SysInformation.com