Acadiana Computer Systems, Inc. gains a 100% ROI on their radiology billing

by implementing Optum’s computer-assisted coding (CAC) software solution, Actus.

Highlights
By implementing Optum CAC solutions, Acadiana:
- Reduced claim denial rates by five percent
- Strengthened audit capabilities and coder support
- Improved efficiencies through automation, manager tools, and straight-to-bill capabilities
- Doubled the number of documents processed per hour

Founded in 1969, Acadiana Computer Systems, Inc. (ACS), is a Louisiana-based company that provides billing/practice management services, practice management software, and health care consulting services to more than 2,000 physician practices and other health care entities.

Challenges
Initially, ACS’s in-house programmers maintained and developed its proprietary practice management software. As ACS’ radiology business expanded throughout Louisiana and into Missouri and Texas, the volume of documents required for coding also increased. Over the years, ACS grew at a steady pace, but as executives began to project massive radiology client growth in the mid-2000s, it became apparent that new technology would be critical to help them achieve their business goals.

ACS coded directly from clinical records, a labor intensive process. The company needed a solution that would help coders be more productive while maintaining and improving accuracy and compliance. As the company continued to take on new business, the management team sought more visibility into the overall coding process.

Solutions
In 2006, ACS began to look for a solution that would enable its business to keep up with the fast-growing volume of radiology documents—as well as the steadily increasing volume of emergency medicine and pathology documents—without adding staff and costs. Even though coders were processing a high volume of documents per hour, they were still not able to keep pace with the ever-growing demand.
After evaluating computer-assisted coding (CAC) vendors in the marketplace, ACS found the support needed in OptumInsight’s, formerly A-Life Medical®, Actus computer-assisted coding solution. Actus features the proprietary and patented natural language processing (NLP) technology, LifeCode®, which understands the syntax and semantics of medical records to abstract clinical facts with their full context. ACS decided Actus would provide the most flexibility, as well as expedite return on investment with a fast implementation and go-live process.

“OptumInsight has been an enormous benefit to our company. Our coding and billing processes have improved immensely since we instituted it,” said Bernadine Smith, CPC, RCC, PCS, manager, ACS coding department. “OptumInsight not only affords ACS with computer-assisted coding solutions for our company, but it also provides an efficient workflow management system. ACS is delighted to have OptumInsight as a partner in today’s competitive billing environment.”

Results

ACS coders now process almost twice the number of documents per hour as they were able to process manually. Actus’ coding support helped ACS increase coding accuracy, which in turn helped reduce denials by five percent. In addition, the automation of charge entry has made a positive impact on ACS’ workflow, boosting productivity and compliance to support the organization’s efforts to offer clients competitive rates while also strengthening its own bottom line.

ACS realized immediate benefits from the Actus executive dashboard, which helped the company better track documents’ progress through the coding cycle, as well as monitor local and remote coders and improve ongoing compliance efforts. The dashboard has provided additional data and analytics that would otherwise not be possible to extract with manual coding processes. “The dashboard is a wonderful tool,” said ACS senior vice president Peggy Kelly. “I don’t know of anything in the industry like it for coding radiology and ER.” By tracking and assessing daily workflows, managers can pinpoint and address snags in their processes.

In addition, a combination of reporting functions and other tools within Actus help ACS with its physician education efforts. This becomes more significant as ICD-10 approaches since the physician documentation and specificity within the new code set will be the key driver to the success of coding output. ACS intends to continue working with OptumInsight to make a seamless transition to ICD-10.

“A-Life is very user-friendly and customer-service oriented. They are always prompt in responding to any questions and welcome feedback. A-Life makes my life easier.”
—Kristi Thompson, Account Manager, ACS coding department

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