

The Role of Revenue Cycle Clinicians

This document provides a summary of actual business challenges and outlines how Conifer Revenue Cycle Solutions helped our clients overcome them.

Challenge

Conifer Revenue Cycle Solutions lacked experienced revenue cycle clinicians who were readily available to the business office staff to manage retrospective clinical denials. Historically, clinical denials requiring review and appeal were sent to hospital care managers to review and appeal if appropriate. Often these denials were not addressed in a timely manner, which resulted in account aging and clinical denial adjustments. Clinical denials were lower in priority to concurrent review demands for hospital care management. Additionally, many hospital care managers are not knowledgeable regarding managed care contract terms and conditions and medical necessity criteria. Also, no metrics existed associated with clinical appellate activity.

Solution

Conifer created a centralized, dedicated, virtual unit it calls the Clinical Resource Center, a multi-specialty team of clinicians to manage clinical denials. This team received a standardized educational curriculum including certified instructor-led courses on InterQual® criteria with competency exams, appeal letter writing courses, and patient accounting.

Conifer's standards for effective appeal letter writing are to utilize medical necessity criteria as a guideline only, anticipate complications based on co-morbidities, utilize any clinical facts that would prevent a safe discharge or transfer to a lower level of care, and construct a concise case including "just the facts."

Conifer established metrics and targets to determine success:

- (Appealable) Determinations (64-70%)
- Recovery (60-72%)
- Turn-around time (5 days)

Results

Conifer's recovery rate for 2008 was an average of 67% of what was determined appealable (over \$56 million), an increase of 75% from the 2007 recovery rate. The appealable determinations consisted of approximately 64% of referred claims. Turnaround time in appellate determination and letter generation (if appropriate) was five calendar days or less. Along with meeting these targets, Conifer also received a 24:1 return on investment.

Conifer Revenue Cycle Solutions and Conifer Patient Communications are operating subsidiaries of Conifer Health Solutions, Inc. They provide services to more than 100 hospitals and health systems nationwide.

Conifer Revenue Cycle Solutions utilizes proprietary workflows and technology to offer comprehensive revenue cycle services ranging from patient pre-registration through the processing of governmental, managed care and self-pay claims.

Conifer Patient Communications provides best-in-class communication services that include physician referrals, patient education, marketing services and pre-admission clinical appropriateness reviews.