

## CASE STUDY:

# Family Health Care Medical Group of Modesto

Automation enables organization to reach new levels of efficiency and increase patient payments revenue.

## CHALLENGE

Eight-provider, lean-staffed primary care practice needs to streamline collecting patient payments while preserving data security.

- One shared credit card terminal
- Printing patient statements once a month
- Calls to patients with outstanding balances

## SOLUTIONS

With Waystar Patient Notebook and Payment Plans, the practice more effectively accepts payments at time of service and improves post-service patient payments with customized payment plans and online bill pay.

## RESULTS

The practice has shortened the time to process payments and also accelerated cash flow, while significantly reducing manual work by approximately 60%.

- Credit cards accepted at any computer in the office
- Collecting email addresses to direct patients to online payment
- Automated payment plans

## The challenge: manual payment processes slow cash flow

Family Health Care Medical Group of Modesto, a primary care group practice with eight providers located in Northern California, wanted to improve its patient payment processes due to an increase in patient deductibles, co-insurance and co-payments.

Before partnering with Waystar, Family Health Care had an outdated and manual method for collecting patient payments from the 750 patients it sees weekly. To start, the entire team—front and back office—shared one credit card terminal. When the billing office staff accepted a credit card payment, that staff member had to walk down a flight of stairs to the main office, run the card and then hurry back upstairs after processing the transaction. Not only did this take valuable staff time, it also increased the risk of data privacy and security breaches. In addition, it took time away from patients, effectively hurting the patient experience.

The organization also wrestled with paper-driven back-end processes. “We would print patient statements once per month and then have to review each one individually to see if a payment was due and whether we needed to make a follow-up phone call,” says Tabitha Hickerson, billing supervisor for Family Health Care. “Many times, when staff called patients about balances, they would have to leave messages, and it could take three to four calls before the staff member and the patient connected. This was time-consuming and frustrating for both patients and staff, and it significantly delayed AR and slowed cash flow.”

## Solution: automated payment solutions smooth collections by increasing options

Through Waystar’s Patient Notebook and Payment Plans, Family Health Care has revised patient payment processes. “Front-desk staff now are able to accept credit card payments right at their workstations using any computer in the office, enhancing the efficiency and security of the process,” says Hickerson.

The practice is also now collecting email addresses from patients up front, so they can better direct patients to Waystar’s Patient Notebook, allowing them to pay their balances from their smartphone or computer. The system gives patients what they want—greater convenience and anytime access without requiring a username and password—while giving the staff a much more automated, hands-off process.

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“We had patients asking for this feature, and it’s a great way to facilitate payment,” comments Hickerson.

“Not only is it more convenient for patients, but it cuts down on staff time because they don’t have to make multiple phone calls to follow up on payment. A staff person may make one call and then direct patients to the website.”

When patients call the practice to make a payment, the new process is so much easier that the phone operators are able to take payments themselves rather than transferring patients to the billing department. As a result, the practice typically only spends one-fourth of the amount of time they used to spend taking a payment by phone.

### Results

Family Health Care’s new processes enhance the patient visit experience, by limiting staff interruptions away from the patient and expediting the check-in line. For example, by collecting and storing email addresses on file, they have cut down on the number of receipts being printed and almost eliminated any receipts being mailed to patients.

The practice also uses Waystar’s Automated Payment Plans. “Our billing department staff works with patients to make arrangements that work for them,” continues Hickerson. “Patients can spread payments over time, which makes their bills more manageable and increases the likelihood that they will pay their entire balance.”

### Impact: an easy transition

Family Health Care valued the ease in which they implemented the Waystar system. “We went from a completely paper-based process to an automated one, and the transition was quite smooth,” comments Hickerson. “Waystar partnered with us to quickly get things up and running. They helped us optimize our workflow and also developed custom reports that led to further improvement. For example, they created a rejected payment report that shows which payments did not go through, allowing staff to promptly research and correct the payments through the report without any manual posting.”

Overall, Family Health Care has become more efficient about patient payment. The practice has shortened the time between date of service and account resolution.

“In many cases, we collect co-payments, bill the insurance and collect patient balances all within 30 days, as opposed to before when it could take a few months,” says Hickerson. “We have also seen a decrease in collections calls and a more consistent flow in patient revenue.”

By partnering with Waystar, the practice has improved its ability to navigate patient payment, which is critical as payment responsibility continues to shift to patients.

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