

CASE STUDY:

Rockford Orthopedics

Blending technologies: Integrating a clearinghouse and practice management system to enhance the bottom line

CHALLENGE

- With a growing practice and an increasing number of monthly claims submissions, Rockford Orthopedics needed a clearinghouse to help streamline operations, enhance efficiency and increase revenue.

SOLUTIONS

- Waystar was able to meet Rockford's needs with a web-based clearinghouse that complemented their eClinicalWorks practice management system and provided automated eligibility verification.

RESULTS

- Since transitioning to Waystar, Rockford Orthopedics has enjoyed higher office productivity, reduced rejections and a more proactive approach to eligibility verification.

Rockford Orthopedics—a 67-provider orthopedic practice located in Rockford, Illinois—needed to switch clearinghouses. “We were unhappy with our old system and felt there were opportunities for improvement in eligibility verification and the integration with our current practice management system—eClinicalWorks,” says Cathy Matthews, EMR Implementation Lead for Rockford Orthopedics. “We are a growing practice, and we wanted a system that would support our growth and improve efficiency while working easily with eClinicalWorks.”

Getting the right technology

Once Rockford Orthopedics decided they needed to make a change, the organization conducted extensive research and consulted with eClinicalWorks to identify the right clearinghouse vendor—ultimately selecting Navicare, now known as Waystar. During the implementation process, Matthews noted everything went smoothly and they did not see a dip in cash flow.

Rockford Orthopedics has found Waystar to be a powerful revenue cycle management tool. “Not only does Waystar seamlessly interface with eClinicalWorks, it offers opportunities to sharpen our processes for eligibility verification, claims submission and remittance,” says Matthews.

Enhancing eligibility verification

Before transitioning to Waystar, Rockford Orthopedics verified eligibility using a cumbersome and unreliable manual approach since their previous clearinghouse did not offer automated eligibility verification. “Front desk staff would ask a patient during check-in whether he or she had insurance and whether that insurance was up-to-date,” says Matthews.

“Claims were generated based on this information, resulting in a significant number of errors due to eligibility issues.” These errors led to back-end rejections that front desk staff had to correct. An onerous and time-consuming effort, claim correction could sometimes take between two and four hours a day.

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"Together, Waystar and eClinicalWorks refined the way we perform eligibility verification," comments Matthews. "We now schedule batch verification to run automatically one or two days in advance of patient visits. The Waystar system flags patients in eClinicalWorks who could not be verified in the batch run, so that front desk staff can query those patients when they arrive for their appointment. For walk-ins, we're able to click on the patient's name in eClinicalWorks and launch Waystar's eligibility tool, verifying insurance in real time as the patient checks in."

The integration between the systems also marries the clinical side of the practice with the business office, fostering better communication about eligibility across the practice. "Once the Waystar application verifies eligibility, it updates both the demographics and appointment screens in eClinicalWorks," says Matthews. "This communicates eligibility information directly to physicians at the point of care, allowing them to see whether a particular procedure, medication or injection is approved or whether precertification is necessary. Eligibility information is also shared with the coding department. This communication serves as education for appropriate coding and reduces the number of rejections we see."

Rockford Orthopedics' new approach to eligibility verification has helped the practice realize enhanced accuracy and process efficiency. "Now checking insurance takes almost no time at all," says Matthews. The practice's rejection rate has decreased by 38% since converting to Waystar, while increasing their claims volume by about 15%. "Eligibility is just not a factor in rejections anymore," comments Matthews. "I would say that less than 1% of our rejections are due to eligibility issues."

The harmony between Waystar and eClinicalWorks allowed Rockford Orthopedics to increase staff productivity by 37%, so they can redeploy staff to other revenue-generating tasks. "Our front desk department no longer has to spend time responding to eligibility-related rejections, allowing staff members to dedicate more time to registration and other activities," says Matthews. "Our coders also have more time to devote to preparing claims, which is increasing the speed of claims submissions and boosting cash flow."

Streamlining claims submissions

In addition to elevating eligibility verification, the integration between Waystar and eClinicalWorks has enhanced the claims submission process for the practice's 11,000 plus monthly claims. Claims are batched automatically in eClinicalWorks and sent to Waystar. "Claims submission is very straightforward now," comments Matthews. "Basically, we don't touch a claim after we create it, unless it rejects. Claims go to Waystar automatically and we don't have to think about it. Before, a staff member had to manually batch all the claims, which took about 20 to 30 minutes per day."

Waystar posts claims status within seconds after receiving the claims. "This allows staff members to quickly respond to any rejections when they come in to work," says Matthews. "Prior to using Waystar, we had to wait longer to learn about rejections, which slowed down the claims submission process."

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Automating Remittance has also improved for Rockford Orthopedics. Through Waystar, the practice receives electronic remittance advice (ERA) and auto-posts to eClinicalWorks. A full 90% of claims sent via Waystar have ERA available. "With one click, we can download ERA information, which eliminated a number of our process steps related to remittance," comments Matthews. "We can also split ERAs, which helps to ease billing."

Rockford Orthopedics also appreciates the ease of finding claims in Waystar. "The 'Find Claim' tool helps us locate a claim quickly and see all the steps to getting it paid," says Matthews.

"If we have a problem with a payment, the details assist us in retracing our steps and pinpointing where the problem occurred—making denial management more efficient."

Preparing for future growth

One key factor in Rockford Orthopedics' satisfaction with Waystar is the attentive customer support the practice receives. "Waystar's 3-Ring™ policy and online message center ensure there is always someone available to address our questions," comments Matthews. "Plus, their eClinicalWorks implementation and enrollment team provided customized support that helped us navigate through conversion."

Over the next few years, Rockford Orthopedics hopes to continue expanding its practice. "Waystar, along with eClinicalWorks will help support this expansion," says Matthews. "Their automated processes, integrated technology and easy-to-navigate solutions will keep our staff working efficiently to consistently drive down rejections and speed cash flow."

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