Best Practices for Simultaneously Increasing Patient Collections and Satisfaction

Gwinnett Hospital System
Travis Mendenhall
FHFMA

Using process and technology to empower staff to collect payments earlier and more often while ensuring patient satisfaction.
Learning Objectives

- Discover how a POS collection strategy is vitally important for a healthcare organization
- Identify how to ramp up adoption of a new patient financial portal
- Explore the payment habits and preferences of patients
- Recognize the improved operational efficiencies that can be realized from a successful patient financial portal

Agenda

- **About Gwinnett Hospital System**
- Strategies for Change: New Processes
- Strategies for Change: New Technologies
- Results and Best Practices
- Questions & Discussion
About Gwinnett Hospital System

553 Beds

Lawrenceville Campus
- Acute Care
- 89 Bed Extended Care Center
- Outpatient Centers
- Neuroscience/Stroke Center
- Open Heart
- Trauma – Level 2
- Pain Management
- Clinics

Duluth Campus
- Acute Care
- Inpatient Rehab Center
- Outpatient Centers
- Bariatrics
- Orthopedics
- Orthopedic ASC
- Concussion Institute
- Clinics

About Gwinnett Hospital System

- Employees 4100
- Affiliated Physicians 800
- Discharges 27,049
- ER Visits 140,470
- Ambulatory Surgery 26,233
- OP Diagnostics 210,594
- Gross Revenue $1.86 billion
- Net Revenue $572,000

FY 2012-2013
“I’ll have someone come in and prep you for the bill.”

Our Challenges

- A need to increase overall POS collections
  - High deductibles are the new normal
- Lost revenue/difficulty estimating patient bills
- Confusing patient statements
- High call center volume
- Manual posting of credit card payments
- Web savvy population expects consumer-friendly payment options
Our Goals

- Break down barriers to payment
  - Inform patients of financial responsibility upfront
  - Help patients understand their bills
  - Provide convenient ways to pay
  - Collect at multiple points during care process
- Reduce call center volume
- Increase cash posting efficiency
- Increase patient satisfaction and loyalty

Agenda

- About Gwinnett Hospital System
  - Strategies for Change: New Processes
- Strategies for Change: New Technologies
- Results and Best Practices
- Questions & Discussion
Strategies for Change

New Processes

New Technology

Staff is empowered to collect payments earlier and more often

Process Strategies

Patient Loyalty Program

Pre-Visit Calls with Estimates

Increase Collections and Patient Satisfaction

Visits for All Self-Pay Scheduled Patients

Presumptive Charity Screening
Patient Loyalty Program

Let Us Assist You

To reach the Financial Counselor who visited your room, call 678-312-3347.

Julie Smith  □  Raven Davis-Higgs  □  Jackie White

After discharge, your personal Financial Advocate for billing & insurance questions or payment arrangements is:

Precious Smallwood  678-312-5462
Jasmine Profit  678-312-5744

Or, email us at gmccares@gwinnettmedicalcenter.org

GHS Resource Center
Patient Accounts
P.O. Box 1190
Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Process Metrics

Financial Counselor Bedside Visits: 1673

Patients who made a payment: 23%
Patients who declined to pay: 58%
Requests for a payment plan: 17%
Requests for financial assistance: 2%

January 1 – June 30, 2013

*With 2 financial counselors
**Process Metrics**

- **$722**
  - Average collection per patient at the bedside

- **$100k**
  - Average collection per month from these same patients after insurance pays

- **$350k**
  - Financial Advocate: average payment arrangements per month

---

**Patient Satisfaction: Measuring the Impact**

Did this new process give you a better billing experience than you’ve had with us before OR with another hospital system?

- **86%**
  - Yes

- **11%**
  - No

- **3%**
  - Not sure
Agenda

- About Gwinnett Hospital System
- Strategies for Change: New Processes
- **Strategies for Change: New Technologies**
- Results and Best Practices
- Questions & Discussion

Strategies for Change

New processes + New Technology → Staff is empowered to collect payments earlier and more often
Bill Estimation/Pre-Service and POS Collections

- Automatic Insurance Verification
- Propensity-to-Pay & Charity Screening
  - Presumptive charity screening
  - Medicaid eligibility screening for self pay
- CPT-Driven Estimates
- Price Transparency for Patients & Staff
Automated POS Collections

- POS Payment Technology in Multiple Departments:
  - Embedded CC link to payment portal in Estimator
  - Tablets for bedside CC and electronic checks
- Reduced posting from 2-3 hours to minutes
- Convenient Payment Options
- Reduced Security Risks

Online Patient Portal

- Self-Service Online Payment Portal
- 2 Options:
  - PayNow does not require registration
  - Enrolled patient module - patients can view account info, insurance payments and pay bills
- Patients Can Review Payment Plans, Get Charity Care Info, Read FAQs
- Call Volumes Have Decreased
Online Portal Enrollment & PayNow

Online Portal Enrollments

- 19,132 Total Enrollments
- 3,815 in the Last Year
Adding Pay Now

- Adding Pay without enrolling feature brought:
  - 15% Drop in enrollment
  - 23% Increase in patient portal payments
  - Reflects growing alarm over online security
  - Desire to keep personal information off-line

Pay Now

Optimizing to Facilitate Payment

- Self Service Reduces Support Calls
  - Reset login, password and security questions
  - Request change of demographic/insurance info

- Patient Payment Assistance
  - Request itemized bill/PDF’s of previously generated bills
  - Check payments/view previous payments
  - Request payment plans on the account level
  - Recurring payments (auto-draft)
  - Paperless option with dunning-specific email
Optimizing Provider Portal

- Provider Portal Provides Visibility
  - Ability to see the patient view
  - Admin rights to reset patient access
  - Is patient enrolled?
  - Account detail without having to toggle to HIS system
  - Time out warning

Optimizing Provider Portal

- Reporting and Posting
  - On-Demand Performance Summaries
  - Sortable On-Demand Payment Reports
    - Devisable by facility, department or individual user
    - Full access to reps for competition
  - Searchable Reports for Missing Payments
  - Electronic Posting with Multiple Department Transaction Codes
Total Portal Collections

- $28,665,503 Total
- $9,973,767 in the Last 12 Months
- Average Payments Per Month: $831,147
- Average Payment Amount: $196

PAID IN FULL

Online Portal Payments

Online Payment $ - Previous Month

- PayNow: $305,092
- Enrolled Patients: $216,117
- WebPay: $477,374
Patient Friendly Statements:
Helping Patients Understand What They Owe

- Clear and easy to read
- Targeted messages by financial class and patient type
- Drive patients to online account management

Patient Payment Plan Statements

- In-house payment plans are increasing
- Internal plans save on outsourced contingency fees
- Payment plan statements refer to the website for payment
- Statements have a payment coupon/demographic form
Strategies for Change

- New processes
- New Technology

Staff is empowered to collect payments earlier and more often

Agenda

- About Gwinnett Hospital System
- Strategies for Change: New Processes
- Strategies for Change: New Technologies
- Results and Best Practices
- Questions & Discussion
Results We Are Most Proud Of

- Online bill pay resulted in 10% drop in call abandonment
- Patient friendly statements brought increased satisfaction
- Process $830k/month online with credit card processing and auto posting
- Increase of $1M in insurance/self pay than previous year
- Collect 40% of patient payments online

Our Top 5 Best Practices

- Implement Solutions to Automate Estimation/Eligibility/Presumptive Charity
- Implement a Patient Loyalty Program
- Implement/Optimize Patient Payment Portal
- Implement/Optimize Provider Payment Portal
- Automate All Patient Payment Cash Posting

Questions and Comments