NORMAN REGIONAL INCREASES CODING PRODUCTIVITY, MANAGES RAC PROCESSES, AND PREPARES FOR ICD-10

"Accurate coding is vital to the bottom-line... Clintegrity 360 provides for optimal revenue-cycle processing."
— Amy Miller, RHIA,
Norman Regional Health System
Norman, Oklahoma

SUMMARY
In recent years, Norman Regional Health System has grown from one to three healthcare campuses in the Norman, Oklahoma area, providing services for all the residents of the south-central section of the state. For many years, this highly respected organization has been a Nuance® Healthcare Health Information Management (HIM) partner and user of the company’s Clintegrity 360 | Coding and subsequently, Clintegrity 360 | Compliance products.

“We feel that, long-term, using knowledge-based instead of logic-based methodology enables the coder to assign a more accurate and specific selection of their diagnosis and procedure codes. Basically, Clintegrity 360 provides for optimal revenue-cycle processing due to the various flag parameters providing notifications to coding staff for further coding/billing efficiencies. These efficiencies result in a positive revenue cycle outcome.” said Amy Miller, RHIA, Norman Regional HIM Manager.

“…We have a consensus among nine coders and myself,” added coding supervisor Debra Ridpath, RHIA, “that the only coding product we want to use is Clintegrity 360.”
KNOWLEDGE-BASED CODING IMPROVES ACCURACY AND PRODUCTIVITY

Clintegrity 360 | Coding is a Knowledge-Based system designed to replicate the official codebooks used for both inpatient and outpatient coding. This methodology, used by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) for training coders, builds and maintains the coder’s ability to identify and accurately assign codes.

Unlike Logic-Tree encoding systems that are designed under the premise that coding is based upon static, absolute sets of rules, the Clintegrity 360 | knowledge-based system integrates coding prompts and resources in a simplistic manner and takes into consideration that documentation practices vary and the system must have the capability to accommodate unique institutional needs. Therefore, far from static in nature, coding is a highly interpretive and often subjective process. Taking all of this into consideration, Clintegrity 360 | Coding helps coders to fully understand the process, which significantly improves accuracy, and therefore productivity, while optimizing reimbursements.

“Our coding staff benefits from the Clintegrity 360 notifications for ‘inpatient only’ procedure edits at the time of coding,” Amy Miller said. “The timely notifications enable our facility to perform pre-bill audits,” per Amy Miller.

“Clintegrity 360 allows us to accurately monitor coding staff productivity. We’re able to use the data Clintegrity 360 provides to ensure our staffing and performance standards are appropriate and in compliance with industry standards. It’s very streamlined.”

“I routinely utilize the Clintegrity 360 Productivity Detail Report in order to monitor specific coding-staff information. For example, I can monitor the total time duration within a record and the total number of times a specific account was reviewed/accessed before finalized. This data is beneficial and meaningful,” added Debra Ridpath.

“Accurate coding/billing is vital to all healthcare organizations for overall long-term financial stability,” Amy Miller stated.

TRANSITIONING TO REMOTE CODING

Industry-wide, the concept of remote coding has become reality as the shortage of experienced coders continues and hospitals compete, not only with each other, but with contract coding companies to hire, and more importantly, retain, certified coding professionals.

Norman Regional will begin its transition to total remote coding in July 2010. “The remote coding transition is an example of our health system’s investment in our skilled coding team to ensure longterm retention,” said Ms. Miller. “Web-native Clintegrity 360 easily facilitates this remote implementation, additionally, our health system captures approximately 80 percent of the patient’s clinical documentation with our electronic health record. Therefore, most of the documentation is available to coding staff at the time of patient discharge. At this time, physician orders and progress are scanned online and available to coding staff within 12 hours from time of discharge.”
Currently, our facility is in phase two of CPOE implementation, which will further enhance the availability of timely information to the coding team.” Debra Ridpath noted, “The average staff tenure at NRHS is nine years. Working remotely has proven to increase productivity up to about 40 percent. Not only that, it helps us to keep our skilled workforce here and happy and avoid the risk of losing them.”

READY FOR RAC
Recovery Audit Contractors (RAC) have caused great consternation for many hospitals as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) program rolls out nationwide. The RACs are tasked with identifying improper Medicare payments, and recouping overpayments under Parts A and B of the Medicare program.

Clintegrity 360 | Compliance, first introduced in 2002, quickly became nationally recognized as a best-of breed product to fully automate auditing and monitoring processes for healthcare systems to avoid the costly risks of non-compliance. Today, health systems like Norman Regional have found Clintegrity 360 | Compliance to be a powerful tool that enables them to prepare for RAC audits. Ridpath added, “We’re really just beginning to use Clintegrity 360 | Compliance aggressively for RAC. As our regional RAC releases information, we will be tweaking our reporting parameters. Currently, one of the focus areas of our organization is excisional debridement.

“(Clintegrity 360) Compliance assists us, not only for HIM but for the entire organization, compiling data for revenue cycle and RAC teams that in turn optimize the revenue cycle process,” said Amy Miller, RHIA, HIM Manager.

FUTURE BUDGET PLANNING – ICD-10 PREPARATION
The “ICD-10 Countdown Program,” is a unique solution from Nuance Healthcare, that duplicates ICD-10 coding in an environment that accelerates preparation and training for mandatory adoption in 2014. One of the program components is the industry’s first ICD-10 Simulator. It includes a sophisticated, avatar-based e-Learning tutorial that provides real-world scenarios to help coders quickly assimilate the skills needed to speed them through the program. “The HIM Department has included the ICD-10 simulator in our proposed FY 2011 budget. We are very excited about the possibility of utilizing the simulator in our ICD-10 staff training,” said Amy Miller. With the expected assistance of Nuance Healthcare’s ICD-10 Simulator, NRHS will be more than prepared for the ICD-10 conversion on October 1, 2014.”

CONCLUSION
“NRHS coding staff are passionate about Clintegrity 360 | Coding.” Debra Ridpath remarked, “They love it. They think it’s a great product. And when your staff feels that passionately about a product, I think it speaks highly of the product and the vendor.”

In summation Amy Miller stated, “We depend daily on Clintegrity 360 as our lifeline…and it has certainly been successful. I anticipate the continued utilization of Nuance Healthcare’s solutions as we move forward with all of the initiatives that are fast approaching healthcare organizations.”
ABOUT NUANCE HEALTHCARE

Nuance Healthcare, a division of Nuance Communications, is the market leader in creating clinical understanding solutions that drive smart, efficient decisions across healthcare. As the largest clinical documentation provider in the U.S., Nuance provides solutions and services that improve the entire clinical documentation process—from capture of the complete patient record to clinical documentation improvement, coding, compliance and appropriate reimbursement. More than 450,000 physicians and 10,000 healthcare facilities worldwide leverage Nuance’s award-winning voice-enabled clinical documentation and analytics solutions to support the physician in any clinical workflow on any device.

To learn more about how Nuance Healthcare can help you improve financial performance, raise the quality of care, and increase clinician satisfaction, please visit us at www.nuance.com/healthcare.