



Taming Complex Scheduling Challenges Saves Lives

OVERVIEW

Challenges

- Complex scheduling for multi-location clinic system
- Handling symptom-based scheduling
- Ability to quickly respond to changes in physician scheduling rules
- Difficulty in finding and keeping information accurate and current
- Declining staff morale in face of complexity

Benefits

- Agility and flexibility in scheduling to adapt to changing physician needs
- Increasing the knowledge of reps in the patient contact center
- Information is accurate and timely
- Improved quality of patient care
- Changes can be updated in half the time previously used
- Contact Center reps can now address patient's needs with symptom-based calls and nurse-driven referrals to emergency or doctor care
- Improvement in staff morale

Contact Center Works as Provider's Right Hand

Serving the needs of more than 265 primary care providers, different office locations and various patient care routines is daunting enough. Couple that with the need to drive operational efficiencies using a centralized call center when many physicians would prefer a direct connection to their scheduler and you have the challenge facing the Carle Patient Care Contact Center serving the Carle Physician Group.

"All of our providers have unique needs. That causes a concern that a call center located miles away from their office might not be able to keep up with their daily demands. Many doctors want to be able to walk out of their office and speak directly to their scheduler," explained Angela Beitelman, Director, Patient Care Contact Center.

But the size and demands of the multi-location hospital system simply made that practice unsustainable. "With Panviva; we can handle a network of 265-plus doctors, residents, advanced practice providers, and nurse practitioners with 55 schedulers," she said.

Mastering Complexity

Familiar with Panviva from her role at as Director of Commercial and Quality Services at Health Alliance Medical Plans; Angela brought Panviva to Carle's Contact Center to help tame the scheduling complexity, reassure providers and bolster the confidence of a contact center staff that often bore the brunt of concern and confusion from physicians as well as patients.

The first step in mastering the complexity of hundreds of providers and thousands of patients was getting all of the scheduling rules into Panviva. That change provided the immediate benefits of increased documentation with access and visibility to daily operations that included frequent scheduling changes. With better documentation, both doctors and schedulers could see what and when changes were made, eliminating confusion.

The second step was creating the structure and workflow process. Getting the process done right meant starting from the beginning; tearing down Carle's old processes and building them back up using workflow rules and decision trees. Despite the complexity, Panviva was up and running within four months.



"Panviva gives us the dynamic ability to meet the needs of our large physician network with speed, accuracy and flexibility."

— Peggy Kidd, Quality Assurance Manager, AvMed

"Panviva was very easy to build. Every task is set up the same way. It's easy to update because the system knows exactly where each rep is in the page when they send feedback," said Kody Thomas, Scheduling Specialist III. "In the old system it took about 20 minutes to update changes. Now it's about 5-10 minutes," Kody said.

Changes in speed, visibility and flexibility have simplified the lives of everyone across the Carle system and the biggest beneficiary is the patients. Patient scheduling is more convenient. Doctors and nurses have more time to spend on patient care.

A Big A-Ha Moment

With Panviva's new visibility and access, instead of one scheduler knowing a change, all schedulers know the change and know it immediately. Concerns about accuracy have greatly reduced and contact center staff morale, which had been declining, improved.

An unexpected side benefit of moving the scheduling rules to Panviva, was the doctors' recognition that their rules had become unknowingly cumbersome.

"It was a big aha moment for our physicians and many chose to rewrite their rules to reduce complexity," said Angela.

Saving Lives

Taming complex scheduling was only half the reason for Panviva. The other, more life critical, is the ability to handle complex symptom-based calls. When a patient calls they want to see their doctor, but some need emergency care.

With Panviva, a scheduler has access to a clinical decision-tree workflow that allows them to ask the caller specific questions about their symptoms. Decision trees are being built for three age groups by symptom/complaint so that someone with no medical training can confidently schedule

that patient or transfer to a nurse for triage.

"It's been lifesaving. These decision trees allow our scheduling staff to get our patients to the right level of care. Working with our clinical leadership; we feel like we are saving lives, literally, every day," Angela said.

The Broader View

The Carle team experience offers a new reality that other clinics can benefit from. Many multi-practice clinics trying to increase efficiencies and cut costs hope to standardize physician scheduling, a practice, Angela says, often doctors resist. "With Panviva, when our providers want to change we change with them."

"Our culture has changed. When we needed information reps used to ask, "Where is it?" Now leadership asks, "Is It in Panviva? It's made a big difference in morale. New reps are very worried about being overwhelmed. As a rep you are entrusted with patient health and safety. Panviva is the equivalent of having an electronic mentor sitting beside you every day," Angela said.

These benefits plus the enthusiasm of both the providers and the contact center staff using Panviva have encouraged Carle to extend Panviva across their multi-location enterprise: From the Contact Center to Financial Services and now toward Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, and soon to the employee at the doctor's front desk.

"We are blueprinting as we go now. We start with what we've already built and then what the new area does differently. We're building branch by branch."

For Carle, and perhaps other multi-location hospital systems, taming the challenge of complex scheduling is just the beginning. The one unifying goal is improving the quality of patient care. Guidance creates high performance teams geared for CX excellence.

Panviva will transform your customer experience! Learn more:

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