Covenant Medical Group streamlines entire revenue cycle management processes with the Optum™ Computer-Assisted Coding solution.

Covenant Medical Group is a multi-specialty physician group located in Lubbock, Texas, servicing 159 physicians across 70 locations spanning Texas and New Mexico.

**Challenges**

In 2009, Covenant Medical Group acquired an emergency department billing organization, inheriting additional manual processes as well as incorrect documentation. It was soon obvious that they needed a technology solution that could streamline many of their processes, consolidate the entire organization, and improve the reporting and documentation from the newly acquired billing entity in a cost effective manner.

Embarking on a technology purchase can be a daunting and time-consuming task. Covenant Medical Group was already struggling to keep up with their enormous workload of up to 350 patients per day. Nonetheless, Covenant Medical Group completed their due diligence and vendor evaluation, and in the end, made the decision to move forward with Optum™. “We were impressed with the capabilities of the Optum CAC solution and the promise of tripling the charts per hour that our coding staff would be able to completely code and send to billing,” stated Deanna Moran, director of the billing office at Covenant Medical Group. “We recognized how quickly and efficiently this technology would automate our coding and billing processes.”

**Solutions**

“The depth of experience that Optum holds relative to computer-assisted coding and the emergency medicine specialty was advantageous to us. The Optum CAC workstation itself was user-friendly and more robust than other products that we had evaluated,” explained Moran.

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Optum LifeCode®’s patented natural language processing (NLP) engine actually understands both the English language and medical terminology. The LifeCode technology reads and interprets the electronic documentation then appropriately assigns the ICD-9/ICD-10 and CPT® codes for reimbursement.

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CPT is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association.

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Optum is now OptumInsight™, part of Optum™—a leading health services business.
Covenant Medical Group

They were most delighted with the internet technology programmers and staff at Optum that lead their implementation and planning efforts. “The impeccable knowledge of the programmers as well as their deep understanding of the Covenant Medical Group workflow was remarkable. This knowledge clearly expedited our integration and implementation process, allowing our organization to go live on the Optum CAC solution in just five days,” stated Moran.

Results

By implementing Optum CAC, Covenant Medical Group dramatically reduced their document backlog from 3.5 months to just three weeks. This translates into hundreds of thousands of dollars saved by avoiding missed claim filing deadlines and overtime payments to coding staff—benefiting the management team as well as the physicians they serve.

Prior to the implementation of Optum CAC, Covenant Medical Group employed a coding staff of five full-time coders that worked approximately 20 hours of overtime each week in order to keep up with their incoming volume. Now with their fully automated coding solution, Covenant Medical Group has been able to reduce their charge entry staff by two, their coding staff by three, and eliminate all overtime, resulting in significant financial savings.

The Optum CAC dashboard provides the management team with data on coder productivity, coder focus areas in terms of document status summary, and site health information to include chart volume. At a glance, the dashboard provides real-time data relative to the entire health of the organization—information that would otherwise be very difficult to obtain and report on.

In addition to the dashboard information, Optum CAC offers in-depth reporting capabilities. Utilizing Optum CAC and the various reporting functions, Covenant Medical Group was able to better identify documentation trends, deficiencies, and patterns for all of their physicians. This data has dramatically improved their physician education efforts which, in turn, results in additional revenue enhancement opportunities.

Upon early implementation, the coders worked with Optum’s NLP team to identify documentation needs specific to their organization. As a result, they are consistently exceeding the observed standard for coder agreement rate. Currently, Covenant Medical Group’s coders are averaging 60 charts per hour, three times the productivity rate of manually coded charts.

Optum CAC has inherently improved the overall compliance efforts within the organization, providing more accurate and consistent coding as well as transparency throughout the coding process. The LifeCode engine instills traceability with the applied highlights in each record, linking each code to the appropriate supporting documentation. With Optum CAC you ‘get it right the first time,’ eliminating the potential for a large number of denials and duplicate billing that would previously occur, yet another cost savings to the organization.

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—Deanna Moran, Director, Billing Office, Covenant Medical Group

Strengthen your revenue cycle with computer-assisted coding.

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