

Optimizing Day-to-Day Operations

CodeRyte's CAC improved coding quality, productivity

ADVOCATE RADIOLOGY BILLING AND REIMBURSEMENT SPECIALISTS is a specialty-specific reimbursement services organization. We provide a broad range of managed billing services to radiology practices and imaging centers.

Headquartered in Powell, Ohio, Advocate offers clients an operational infrastructure that is focused on reimbursement, claims processing, and compliance. We serve 50 radiology clients nationwide and employ 205 full-time and part-time staff members. Founded in 1998, Advocate processes more than 5 million records annually.

With our seasoned staff of professionals, Advocate focuses on addressing the unique needs of today's practicing radiology physicians and offers a diverse range of talent to deliver exemplary client support. We maintain a simple but direct goal – pursuing perfection in the science of radiology reimbursement. We pride ourselves on being an early adopter of new technologies to produce consistently superior revenue results for our clients.

A consistently strong organization, Advocate has grown considerably throughout its 11 years. In 2004, our team found it was facing increased staffing costs and overtime hours to keep up with its coding workload and client demands. The coding staff suffered low morale and burnout, while the leadership team grappled with the costs of the overtime, recruiting, and staff turnover.

Our team decided the time was right to pursue computer-assisted coding (CAC). We sought a solution that would improve coder productivity and capacity, reduce denials, strengthen compliance, improve coding outcomes, eliminate our backlog, and reduce turnaround time.

THE CODERYTE SOLUTION

We evaluated the field of CAC vendors and quickly decided on CodeRyte, in Bethesda, Md., after preliminary testing showed the company's technology improved coding quality by almost 11 percent.

Through natural language processing, CodeRyte's engine applies evidence-based criteria to identify correct billing codes from clinical information in radiologists' reports with statistical precision. Context and confidence anchor the technology, which

easily navigates subtle language nuances such as negation, context, and time references in the medical record.

Advocate has been a CodeRyte client since May 2005. CodeRyte's technology was able to quickly address our need – improving coder productivity, turnaround time, coder outcomes, and compliance while reducing denials and backlog.

The radiology billing industry is in transition, and CodeRyte understands the direction the industry is headed. Its technology and products are not only beneficial for coding accuracy and cost effectiveness, but also for electronic workflow maximization and scalability.

ACROSS-THE-BOARD BENEFITS

CodeRyte increased Advocate's coding staff productivity by more than 210 percent. We once averaged 50 reports per hour and now average more than 150 reports per hour. The efficiency gains allowed us to eliminate eight open positions as well as nine coding and data entry positions. All of the staffing changes were achieved through attrition and reassignment, with coders using their skills on accounts receivable reduction.

CodeRyte revolutionized how Advocate manages its coding staff. Prior to CodeRyte, Advocate relied on labor-intensive spreadsheets to manually track the work of 25 full-time coders. Edits to the coders' work were done by hand as well, eating away at managers' time.

The manual approach to data management was exhausting and often incomplete. Reporting was inconsistent from office to office and manager to manager. The manual process introduced subjectivity at a low level. We can manage the process now, which we couldn't before. Now we can measure everything.

CodeRyte's cost-effective, easy-to-operate system also helped us cast out our mass of paper and, at the same time, achieve new levels of denial management and turnaround time. We quickly eliminated coder overtime costs and decreased our average days in accounts receivable by almost 5 percent.

The production consistency is a major benefit of CodeRyte. We've had a 60-percent decrease in turnaround time and now turn things around in only 24 hours.

By Kirk W. Reinitz, CPA, president and CEO of
Advocate Radiology Billing and Reimbursement Specialists

Partnering with CodeRyte additionally helped us reduce coding-related denials by 8 percent and stave off many coding errors that are intrinsic with human coding. These kinds of errors would make it through Advocate's manual system, but they no longer occur with CodeRyte.

Advocate provides more compliant codes with CodeRyte's automated LCD and Correct Coding Initiative (CCI) edits, concurrent auditing, and related reports routing. I credit the technology with finding additional procedures in the text of the medical record that human coders might have missed, adding to our appropriate reimbursement capture. We apply the rules more consistently now.

CORRECT-TO-BILL SAVINGS

CodeRyte sorts reports processed through its engine into three queues for us, based on the statistical confidence of codes generated for each specific report. Each note is subjected to rigorous analysis and is compared with the millions the engine has processed before to determine its accuracy. Those with the highest degree of confidence are sent Correct-To-Bill.

CodeRyte's Correct-To-Bill approach applies multiple elements of technology and statistical analysis to code medical reports accurately. CodeRyte's team worked hand-in-hand with us to analyze

the organization's confident coding outcomes and determine what could be sent straight to its CPU billing system based on its compliance policy.

With the organized queue system, we discovered another benefit of the CodeRyte system: simple, efficient auditing, and quality assurance (QA). CodeRyte's automated QA helps us assure coders are accurately applying the appropriate ICD-9 and CPT code for every procedure that is performed. CodeRyte's auditing tools offer us insight into our operations and help fine tune coding through clearly defined and documented coding standards; real-time, prospective audit capabilities; and inter-coder agreement measurements.

CodeRyte substantially improved our coding quality. It has also improved our workflow consistency and given us added flexibility, such as the ability to have our coders subspecialize in their coding expertise. All this has allowed us to raise the bar for our quality standards, resulting in improved revenue cycle times and revenue capture for our clients.

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