

Case Study



MedQuest
RADIOLOGY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

MedQuest's Comprehensive Radiology Management Services Help Ensure Success for a Hospital and its New Imaging Facility

Situation Overview

A hospital located in a competitive and rapidly growing healthcare market had an excellent reputation for its top-of-the-line equipment and high-quality radiology interpretations. MedQuest Radiology Management Services served as the hospital's strategic partner for imaging, conducting analyses that have driven decisions on new imaging sites and imaging network optimization.

In 2011, the hospital asked MedQuest to manage a new, freestanding imaging center located 10 miles from the main campus which offered a full range of radiology services. Eighteen months later, the hospital expanded its management relationship with MedQuest to include its main hospital radiology department. In early 2014, the remote imaging center became part of a 60-bed medical center.

The Task

The hospital tapped MedQuest to help it ramp up the remote facility's imaging services quickly, optimize the system's radiology operations and operate its two imaging sites in an integrated manner that provided maximum access to patients and optimal profitability for the system. MedQuest was asked to help both the new center and the hospital operate more efficiently, utilize existing imaging capacity more effectively, and grow imaging profitability.

MedQuest's biggest challenge was to ensure the success of the new location while maximizing overall effectiveness of the health system's imaging network. MedQuest focused on efforts to:

- Ensure individual sites operated efficiently
- Improve patient and referring physician service and satisfaction
- Create additional capacity to drive growth

Case Study

Actions

MedQuest conducted an extensive assessment of both locations at the inception of management services. During on-site visits, the MedQuest team observed operations, conducted staff interviews and performed detailed time studies on clinical modalities and registration. In addition to spending time with the lead radiologist, MedQuest reviewed scheduling, registration, patient access, major imaging modalities and interventional radiology.

Operations and Workflow

MedQuest identified several specific problem areas that could be streamlined and improved. In one area, an underperforming mammography unit at an employed physician practice was relocated to the facility, resulting in an expansion of mammography screening capacity by 2,500-3,500 scans per year.

An examination of patient flows resulted in extended hours for certain modalities and services. The outpatient imaging facility has been able to perform up to 20 MRI procedures in a single day with MedQuest's guidance and proprietary processes for real-time scheduling, insurance verification and pre-authorization.

The implementation of twice-per-week reporting on scan volume and revenue provided management with better insight into real-time metrics. MedQuest also implemented report turnaround time reporting by the radiologist, while also facilitating greater involvement by the radiologist in scan protocols.

To support referring physician and patient satisfaction, MedQuest created an X-ray express program that provided patients with a 30-minute "door-to-door" X-ray scan and a report in two hours. The company also created a strong marketing program for the new facility that focused on building relationships with the referring community.

Scheduling

As MedQuest reviewed the two facilities, the team found significant gaps in the MRI schedule, a one-week backlog for MRI scans, a lack of linkage between CPT codes and scheduled scan times, no patient confirmations and the absence of an advanced review of the schedule to ascertain if all authorizations had been obtained.

Drawing upon its deep experience with both hospitals and freestanding facilities, MedQuest instituted a number of best practices to address the problems and maximize productivity. Using a scheduling script, office staff ensures that every scan is verified and authorized, while also reducing total scheduling time. The addition of telephone confirmation of appointments also optimized the scheduling and reduced no-shows.

One of MedQuest's initiatives was to reduce scheduled scan times, which decreased hours and staff while performing the same scan volume. This move also increased available scan slots by more than 30%. MedQuest also identified and trained a lead scheduler to maximize and troubleshoot a real-time schedule, which allows for higher productivity. By using MedQuest's proprietary radiology information systems, the center was able to assign scan times to individual CPT codes.

"MedQuest helps us take a deeper look beyond reimbursement to focus on resource consumption. That's people and processes. They look through a different lens at operational efficiencies and workflow, and make sure we have the right complement of staff from a productivity standpoint. They have helped us understand where there are opportunities to generate revenue and volume, and also to look at productivity in a different way."

— Hospital President

Case Study

Results

MedQuest has helped the hospital system maximize overall success, managing a successful ramp-up of the new imaging facility and maintaining radiology volume at the main hospital campus. MedQuest has improved profitability at the main hospital campus while managing shifts in volume.

Outpatient MR and CT volume for the remote site have increased 27% from 2011 to 2014, including 17% growth from 2012 to 2014. Overall radiology staffing expense has been reduced by \$600,000 in the last two years even as outpatient MR and CT revenue has grown 2%.

In 2014, MedQuest conducted an in-depth analysis of the potential for a new freestanding outpatient imaging center. Combining extensive demographic and financial analysis, an understanding of existing referral patterns and a third-party database, the hospital received the insightful information required to make a decision to move forward with a new center. This new location will be an IDTF center that will provide a key access point both geographically and economically for the hospital's patient base. Under MedQuest's guidance, the hospital has also added a mobile mammography unit to reach underserved areas in the community.

The hospital is so confident in MedQuest's people, processes and capabilities that it has engaged the company to manage its cancer center, conduct marketing for four other service lines, syndicate an ambulatory surgery center and serve as a strategic advisor on overall market and physician network development.

