HEALTHCARE CLINIC: BAPTIST PRIMARY CARE

With over 49 clinics and 150 providers, Baptist Primary Care (BPC) is one of the largest physician groups in the southeastern United States. Due to the impact of high-deductible health plans (HDHPs), their patients' financial health has become a major area of focus.

CHALLENGE:

The increasing share of healthcare costs borne by patients from higher deductibles and co-pays means that great care is not only required in clinical interactions but in financial discussions as well. While BPC maintains an efficient billing process and uses a third-party collection agency to follow up on delinquent accounts, they expect all financial interactions to be handled with respect and understanding. However, according to Steve Runnels, the Patient Accounting Manager for BPC, "The communication with patients about their bills has changed dramatically." Early on he noticed the surprise and confusion caused by new health plans with different coverage. "The biggest change is that patients and their families are questioning charges and they're more curious about what they're paying for and what their responsibilities would be if they opted for a self-pay discount in lieu of using their insurance."

Steve recognized how crucial effective communication and transparency among all parties had become. Patients, the business office, and the collection agency had to be on the same page. However, in 2015, BPC started hearing from patients that they were being treated poorly by their third-party collection agency. When staff followed up with the agency to address the patients' complaints, they were not getting responses as quickly as they needed them. Prior to this surge in complaints, the agency had moved out of state and somehow this lack of proximity had had a negative impact on communication.

"We can see every aspect of account activity and have full control to make changes or cancel the account as we see fit."

Steve Runnels,
Patient Accounting Manager.

PROFESSIONAL'S CLIENT TOOLS

Client Tools is a secured online platform that provides clients with full access to account activity 24/7.

Total Transparency

We offer transparency through our online client portal. There's even access to transcripts and recordings of all calls.

Communication

Through a dedicated client success team, communication is easy and based on client preference.

SOLUTION:

Baptist Primary Care needed to find an agency that was more responsive and offered better transparency. BPC also wanted to use more than one agency in order to promote competition among vendors. They issued a request for proposal and ended up selecting three agencies in the process Interestingly, one of the agencies chosen was Professional Credit which is headquarterd 3,000 miles away in Oregon. While many physician groups have traditionally tended towards using local collection agencies and while distance could have been a factor in the challenges BPC had experienced previously, they were impressed with the complete transparency offered by Professional Credit through their online client portal, Client Tools. Through Client Tools, Baptist has 24/7 access to all patient engagement activity. They can cancel accounts, post direct payments or adjustments, transfer account files electronically, and access a variety of reports on financial performance and account status.

The level of communication that Professional Credit offered was also a key factor in Baptist's decision. The availability of Professional Credit's dedicated client success team along with the ability to communicate and collaborate through messaging, work queues and chat all within the secure Client Tools portal are services not offered by their other agencies. In addition, BPC can request the transcript and recording of any call if a patient were to raise an issue about a contact with Professional Credit. For Steve, Professional Credit has helped to ease

the burden in dealing with the complexity of financial interactions with patients:

"We can see every aspect of account activity and have full control to make changes or cancel the account as we see fit. We really aim for a patient-friendly approach, and Client Tools helps us acheive that."

Professional is a national, HFMA Peer Reviewed accounts receivable management firm. With our collaborative approach to patient financial engagement and the use of innovative technology, behavioral science, and speech analytics, we ensure healthcare providers have a fully transparent view of how their patients are treated with 24/7 access to account activity and recordings of any calls. To address rapidly evolving patient communication preferences, we provide many convenient and secure options for patients to manage their accounts via an omnichannel strategy.