



Summit Pacific Medical Center Increases Reimbursement, Clinic Volumes With MEDITECH's Analytics Solution

Introduction

Patient appointments at Summit Pacific Medical Center (Elma, WA) were always in demand, with providers' schedules filling up fast. Yet physicians were still falling below their target patient volumes by almost 25 percent, compared to other area healthcare organizations.

To help patients gain access to care, Summit Pacific needed to address the disparity between the number of appointment requests and the volume of patients seen. But with three different software systems in place, the fragmented environment made it difficult to analyze organization-wide data and use that information to refine processes.

To drive change, the organization integrated the hospital and clinics using MEDITECH's Expanse EHR, and selected MEDITECH's fully integrated Business and Clinical Analytics (BCA) solution as the backbone of its intelligence efforts. In doing so, they not only expanded clinic volumes, but also uncovered processes that could be adapted to enhance provider revenue and strengthen the financial condition of the organization.

SNAPSHOT

Opportunity

Improve operational efficiency and increase patient volumes in clinics. Parlay knowledge gained into opening of new wellness center.

Solution

MEDITECH's Business and Clinical Analytics

Benefits

- 8% increase in daily clinic volumes; on target for 10% increase in volume from March 2018
- 70% decrease in the time between chart closures; the number of charts open at any given time decreased by 37%
- A/R days reduced by 13 days
- No-show rate decreased by 1.6%
- Savings of approximately \$1,000 per report request with in-house reporting

Profile

Located a short distance from the northwest coast, **Summit Pacific Medical Center** (Elma, WA), part of the Summit Pacific hospital district, is a Critical Access Hospital with a level IV trauma designation. It operates two rural healthcare clinics, an urgent care clinic, and a newly opened **wellness center**.

Opportunity Knocks

After implementing MEDITECH across all care settings in 2017, Summit Pacific recognized an opportunity to analyze organization-wide data with the BCA solution. They determined that the information could help them to identify, and then refine, areas for performance improvement. Ultimately, leadership could draw on these results to prepare for the opening of a state-of-the-art wellness center.

Summit Pacific started the initiative by addressing patient volumes and throughput; its clinics faced capacity and access constraints, with some patient

appointments booked weeks in advance. Despite this demand, provider volumes still fell below the target. The organization's Decision Support team employed standard content dashboards in BCA to identify a 30 percent trend in no-shows and cancellations, leaving unfilled slots on clinic providers' schedules.

Based on these results, Summit Pacific aimed to:

- Reduce no-shows and fill cancellations.
- Increase clinic volumes while expediting clinic throughput.

Governance

Rollout of BCA was spearheaded by the Decision Support team, who invited staff across the organization to help develop reports. Employee participation confirmed that the right information was being tracked to guide business decisions. Staff also played a role in determining the validation process, which, in turn, helped ensure no one felt “attacked” by the data.

Soon, staff appreciated the importance of data transparency. Leaders at all levels made sure employees understood that BCA would drive more informed decisions. Department heads would be able to determine which workflow worked best for their staff, so teams weren't overburdened.

BCA's popularity grew quickly, and dashboard requests skyrocketed. In response, Summit Pacific devised a process for staff to submit report requests, enabling the Decision Support group to prioritize submissions and track progress. When Decision Support has finished building the report, they email the link to stakeholders.



Course Correction

Summit Pacific began its BCA journey with the solution's standard dashboards, but they also saw potential in the self-service analytics tools. Through a custom "Ambulatory Scorecard" dashboard, they monitored organizational goals specific to the number of attended appointments and hours in clinical care per day for providers. Leaders gained insight — at the provider and clinic level — from BCA, which sparked new approaches that:

- **Enforce Patient Policies:** Leaders discovered that overlooked policies regarding cancellations and "no shows" reduced patient volumes and prevented clinics from filling vacated appointment slots. After notifying patients of the policies, the clinics began enforcing rules such as 24-hour advance notice for cancellations and zero tolerance for late arrivals. If a patient is not on time for an appointment, the provider moves on to the next patient. Latecomers are given the option to reschedule or see another available provider.
- **Work Down the Waitlist:** Leaders reduced the number of appointments scheduled weeks in advance for greater access to care. In addition, schedulers are able to monitor cancellations in real time and fill those

slots with waitlisted patients.

- **Increase Hours in Clinical Care:** To reduce the administrative burden on providers, Summit Pacific hired RN/MA care coordinators to handle messages, medication refills, and lab calls. Providers now have more time to see patients.
- **Improve Patient Compliance:** Care coordinators target patients due for annual checkups using all methods of communication — from texts to phone calls and reminder postcards close to patients' birthdays.

Decision Support understood that analytics are pivotal to identifying problem areas, analyzing outcomes, and refining staff processes and patient policies. They tracked clinic volumes with a trend line by weeks per month to see if these changes resulted in a positive or negative impact. Also, they determined how effective the new care coordinator position was by monitoring RN resource activity, including the number of messages sent and tasks completed daily per RN.





Increasing Provider and Clinic Reimbursement

Following its success with expanding patient volumes, Summit Pacific defined subsequent goals for building efficiency and increasing reimbursement at its clinics. Again, BCA was a catalyst for driving and measuring these goals, backing up process enhancements with indisputable data. The clinics now focused on:



Improved wRVU Productivity:

Many Summit Pacific providers are paid with a wRVU productivity bonus. As these providers increased their patient visits per day, they wanted transparency on their associated wRVUs. Pulling wRVU data into a BCA dashboard allowed them to view their progress toward reimbursement goals, compare trends, and collaborate on process enhancements. For example, by sharing information, providers could see how their documentation affected coding and find ways to improve it. Soon, the Finance department adopted this dashboard to calculate wRVU quarterly payouts.



Faster Chart Turnaround:

Ensuring charts were closed quickly was vital for prompt reimbursement as patient volumes expanded. Summit Pacific leadership implemented guidelines with the goal of closing the chart by patient departure. Decision Support leveraged BCA to track time to closure and unsigned notes at the provider level. The dashboard showed variations among providers, indicating who needed extra assistance.



Timelier Coding:

Prompt reimbursement also required that coders were coding efficiently and finalizing the accounts for billing. A BCA dashboard tracking daily coder productivity was emailed to the coding manager every morning.



Outcomes

Summit Pacific has improved transparency among providers, executives, and staff, as they view and compare real-time information through centralized dashboards. Empowered by BCA's filtering, drilldown, and editing capabilities, they no longer have to rely on Decision Support to prepare requested reports. For example, managers frequently use reports in quarterly reviews to celebrate staff successes and demonstrate gains.

BCA's true value, says Summit Pacific, lies in measuring results in real time versus waiting for quarterly reports; the medical center is able to respond more quickly with process adjustments and corrections. Since implementing BCA, Summit Pacific has experienced the following:

- 8 percent rise in daily clinic volumes
- 70 percent decrease in the amount of time between chart closures; the number of charts open at any given time decreased by 37 percent
- 18 percent reduction in A/R days by using the coder desktop to work through backlogs
- 1.6 percent decrease in no-show rates
- An average increase of 1.3 patients per day per provider.

A Long-Term Investment in Reporting

Summit Pacific eliminated the need for third-party reporting services by leveraging BCA's self-service analytics tools. Each custom report was costing them \$1,000. With 170 custom dashboards in place, BCA accounts for approximately \$170,000 in savings.

The solution's flexibility is limitless: MEDITECH data, including productivity tracking, is housed in the Data Repository and mapped to BCA dashboards. External data — in SQL, Excel, and other formats — can be imported directly into BCA.

Summit Pacific's small Decision Support team was able to manage custom reporting requests by reducing the amount of labor dedicated to running reports. They take advantage of setting data refresh rates and use the automatic scheduling feature to email reports directly to stakeholders; that way, everyone can monitor progress toward organizational goals with consistent and timely data.

Building on Accomplishments

Identifying areas for operational and financial improvements at its clinics enabled Summit Pacific to apply the results to its new, state-of-the-art wellness center. Focusing on preventive care, the wellness center houses more than 20 providers and offers therapy and rehabilitation services.

Amenities include:

- A retail pharmacy
- An expanded café and coffee bar
- Indoor and outdoor play spaces
- An outdoor pavilion fitness trail and exercise equipment
- Education and conference areas.

Looking ahead, Summit Pacific plans to use BCA to determine how the community is utilizing the center, and to identify patients who could benefit the most from its services.

“Data is simply facts or figures, but when it’s organized and presented in a way that makes it meaningful or useful, then it becomes information. BCA takes data and converts it into usable information for the end user, resulting in the ability to drive decision making, improve processes, and enhance the patient experience.”

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