

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



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Chief Technical Officer

Shields Health Care Group

A Phased Approach to Success with Intergy RIS by Sage

For more than 25 years Shields Health Care Group has been a leading innovator in healthcare throughout New England. As new technology has become available, the Shields family has implemented patient-centered facilities designed to meet specific needs in the region, bringing quality medical care to communities with imaging centers that provide MRI, CT, and PET scans.

From the beginning Shields was committed to offering quality without compromise and they grew their business in phases starting with MRI. They later added CT and PET while opening new centers in communities where patients previously had to travel 20 miles or more for services. To support this growth, Shields has an on-staff development team creating systems and solutions to manage the business. However, with 26 locations, it became clear that they needed to partner with an expert in practice management to improve and streamline processes. “We didn’t see any reason to reinvent the wheel,” explains Patricia Whelan, chief technical officer. “There are companies out there that are experts in developing billing and scheduling solutions and Sage Software is a leader in that field. It made more sense to partner with them and create an implementation plan that would work for our unique needs.”

This is exactly what they did. Just as they have done for more than two decades, Shields looked at how to meet the needs of their patients more effectively with new solutions and how to best implement those solutions. They began with an in-depth review of their existing processes and an analysis of their needs. “Once we looked closely at where we were, we looked at what the new system could bring to the table,” says Whelan. “This enabled us to figure out what changes we needed to make to leverage those solutions most effectively.”

The result was a phased implementation plan in which the back end would be converted to Intergy RIS by Sage to streamline billing and collections and virtually eliminate paper. The two main goals were improving staff productivity and increasing overall cash flow. Once the billing department was completely centralized and streamlined, they would look at replacing the existing front end system with Intergy RIS to further enhance scheduling and patient information management.

The simplicity of Intergy’s graphical user interface (GUI) was a key piece of improving staff productivity and simplifying the process of adding new staff as the business continues to grow.

Customer:

Shields Health Care Group

Specialty:

Radiology

Location:

Massachusetts

Number of Locations: 26

Number of Employees: 600

Products:

- Intergy RIS

CHALLENGE

Improve staff productivity and increase overall cash flow. Manage 26 locations more efficiently by streamlining and centralizing billing and scheduling.

SOLUTION

Centralizing the billing department is the first priority, then scheduling and patient information management. Intergy’s graphical user interface (GUI) improves staff productivity and makes it easy to train new staff as the business continues to grow.

RESULTS

Decreased number of days from date of service to release of claim by 50%; Increased cash flow \$200,000 - \$300,000; Number of denials from claims exceeding filing limits reduced by 77%; Time in A/R down by an average of 8-10 days; Reduction in paid hours per bill of 20%.

“The GUI piece was huge for us,” says Whelan. “We wanted the opportunity to have a system that was so easy that you can sit down and just do it. With such fast paced growth—we opened five new locations this year—we couldn’t keep up on training with the old system and now we can get people up and running quickly.”

In terms of how people work every day there were some other major changes. Shields has approximately 600 employees working at the 26 sites, which are all set up as independent entities. Often, there are different processes and workflows and most staff were specialized and couldn’t pick up slack for other employees or other sites.

“Intergy RIS has broken down those walls,” explains Whelan. “With all the information so easily available to everyone, staff can step in and handle something from another group, which has meant we can address issues faster and not fall behind.”

The increased productivity has contributed to improvements in the other goal area—cash flow. Since Shields tracked several metrics before implementation and then again after implementation, they have a thorough understanding of the changes. Whelan believes that the electronic claims and remittance pieces have had the biggest impact. “The best part is the scrubber that checks and cleans up the claims before they are sent out. We have seen some significant changes in our billing that have resulted in big increases in revenue.”

So far, Shields has seen:

- Reduction in paid hours per bill of 20%
- 50% decrease in number of days from date of service to release of claim
- 33% decrease in the time from when the claim is billed to when the bill is paid
- Increase in cash flow of \$200,000 - \$300,000 a year (13-20%)
- 77% reduction in number of denials resulting from claims exceeding filing limits
- 2% drop in bad debt write-offs
- Time in A/R is down by an average of 8-10 days

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Whelan continues to track the improvements in revenue and expects to see ongoing progress. “There used to be a lot more to the process of submitting claims,” she recalls. “On our end it was long and complicated with many claims going back and forth several times. Most of that is gone now.” They are also improving patient statements with electronic statements. “The Sage Software patient statements brought us into the 20th century,” says Whelan. “The printing, mailing, etc. has been eliminated.”

The streamlined efficiency and reduction in the use of paper has had some other financial benefits as well. Before implementing Intergy RIS, Shields was spending upwards of \$4,000 a year just in printer maintenance and support. Whelan also notes that the time spent on the task of managing maintenance and supply ordering has been eliminated. They have also reduced paper and supply costs significantly.

With the first phase of the implementation almost complete, Whelan and her team are now doing a pilot site for paperless and filmless management of patient records, studies and images. The pilot is the first step in transitioning the front end of the business. “It’s going to be challenging for a business of our size and complexity,” she says. “We are extremely sophisticated in terms of technology but I want my developers working on clinical results reporting, utilization review, hospital interfaces and other software projects that differentiate us from our competitors. For the billing, scheduling and data management, I want a partner with that expertise, someone who deals with issues like HIPAA everyday. I have found that with Sage Software.”

ABOUT SAGE SOFTWARE

Sage Software Healthcare Division is a part of Sage Software, the North American business of UK-based The Sage Group plc. Sage Software supports the needs, dreams and challenges of small and medium-size businesses (including medical practices of 500 employees and more) by offering leading business management, practice management and electronic health records products and services. More than 2.6 million North American small and medium-sized businesses and tens of thousands of medical practices currently rely on Sage Software applications.

For more than 25 years, Sage Software Healthcare Division has delivered easy-to-use, scalable and customizable software for practice management, including private practices, multi-million dollar medical enterprises and community health centers. Our Intergy EHR by Sage electronic health records software is CCHIT CertifiedSM for its product, and meets CCHIT ambulatory electronic health record (EHR) criteria for 2006.

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