

Coastal Orthopedics Shows Resilience in Unstable Times

THE CHALLENGE

Like many orthopedic practices, Coastal Orthopedics was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, collections for the month were the highest in the history of the organization. Then came COVID-19. In the following months, the practice needed to brace for interruptions to services, including impacts to billing due to the pandemic. Here's how they worked with NextGen RCM Services during this difficult period.

THE SOLUTION

Get RCM expertise

Coastal Orthopedics has used NextGen Healthcare's platform for more than ten years. They began with the Practice Management (PM) system and later adopted NextGen Enterprise EHR. The practice outsources all billing functions, except for coding and insurance authorizations, to NextGen RCM Services—essentially all functions once claims are entered into the system.

NextGen RCM Services helps Coastal Orthopedics get claims out, post payments, resolve denials, manage appeals, mail out paper claims, report end-of-month numbers, and provide system support. "If there's a possibility they can help, they'll attempt to do so," said Iris Bernier, director of revenue cycle at Coastal Orthopedics. "NextGen RCM Services has an endless number of resources that we don't have as an orthopedic practice."

Coastal Orthopedics and NextGen Healthcare have a weekly cadence for working together to address any unresolved issues. "They serve as our sounding board and help us figure out what's going on in the industry," said Bernier.

Respond proactively

During the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Coastal Orthopedics was operating at limited capacity. Providers focused on emergent cases in hospitals, acute injuries, and postoperative follow-up patients in clinics. Those same patients also received physical therapy. Normally, their physicians rotate to different offices throughout the week, but during this time they split physicians, managers, and staff into teams to be stationed at each location to continue providing necessary services.

The practice continued to enter charges into their system and bill for services. NextGen RCM Services proactively followed up on accounts receivable (A/R). Together with Bernier, they put a denial management process in place to balance the decline in collections.

Medicare and Medicare Advantage Plans account for more than 50 percent of Coastal Orthopedics' total business. NextGen RCM Services provided support for managing Medicare billing, including determining whether the practice should participate in CMS's Accelerated and Advanced Payment Programs.

CLIENT PROFILE

Coastal Orthopedics

- Largest orthopedic group in Sarasota and Manatee counties
- Takes a multi-specialty approach to musculoskeletal care that includes pain management, physical therapy, and diagnostic imaging
- Medical staff consists of 38 providers that include MDs, DOs, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.
- Physician-owned, independent of any hospital system

NEXTGEN HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS

- NextGen® RCM Services
- NextGen® Enterprise PM
- NextGen® Enterprise EHR

HIGHLIGHTS



Maintained financial stability during the COVID-19 pandemic



Implemented a denial management review process



Accommodated telehealth billing without requiring additional clicks in the EHR



Responded effectively to ongoing developments in the healthcare economy

Manage constant change

“NextGen RCM Services provided more than reporting,” said Bernier. “We needed help understanding the dynamics of the situation.” Similar to colleagues in their field, Coastal Orthopedics had to adapt to industry changes quickly. They had to deal with the many moving pieces of telehealth, Medicare’s Advanced Payment Plan, along with other funds that were made available, and the easing of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) regulations.

“NextGen Healthcare helped us understand what ongoing developments meant for our practice,” said Bernier. “For example, we had to first understand how to bill for telehealth. Within two days of our initial discussion, we had five patients set up for telehealth. By the following Monday, we had 55 patients scheduled for telehealth. That’s how quickly we were able to move.”

With each third-party payer having its own criteria, the NextGen Healthcare RCM team helped Coastal Orthopedics maintain payer guidelines. Answers to questions such as “How Blue Cross Blue Shield plans compare to Medicare?” and “What were other commercial payers doing?” led to processes that ensured reimbursement for specific claims.

Modify workflow to adapt

Coastal Orthopedics took advantage of the platform’s configurable features. The practice’s IT team developed a workflow that links the EHR and PM together, looks at the patient’s appointment, and recognizes whether or not it’s a telehealth visit—without changing provider workflow. These changes on the back end enabled the practice to accommodate telehealth billing without requiring additional clicks in the EHR.

“NextGen Enterprise EHR and PM allows you to look into your practice’s database and harvest that data to make an easier workflow for your physicians,” explained Jessica Fowler, Health Information Manager at Coastal Orthopedics. “The goal for our providers is to have them focused on medicine and not the computer. NextGen Healthcare allows us to let administrators do what administrators do and physicians do what physicians do.”

THE RESULTS

“NextGen helps us manage contractual issues with payers and follow up on accounts receivable, as well as provides support as needed,” said Bernier. “If I need to resolve an issue quickly, they do it at a moment’s notice. My team members feel comfortable reaching out to anyone at NextGen RCM Services.”

Information for monthly reporting is readily available. The data can be manipulated, run at any time, and printed out in an easy-to-read format. The practice can review trending information—denial rates, provider performance, and comparison of one provider against another provider. This approach is far more efficient than the manual process of obtaining data.

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Jessica Fowler
Health Information Manager
Coastal Orthopedics

Look ahead

Bernier believes that Coastal Orthopedics' future is heavily linked to how they leverage technology. Profitable growth in an unstable marketplace will hinge on staff being able to perform and document tasks efficiently and effectively.

"We're pretty steady with how we're growing from a provider perspective. And we're building two buildings. We're going to expand our market in Bradenton," said Bernier.

Coastal Orthopedics continues to seek opportunities to leverage telehealth in the future. Their physicians are working on initiatives that will advance patient engagement and expand access to care.

Despite the unstable healthcare economy, partnership with NextGen RCM Services has kept Coastal Orthopedics on its steady path to growth.

"My staff and I could not do what NextGen RCM Services does for us—no way, shape, or form," said Bernier.

"If someone asked me, 'Would you outsource to NextGen RCM Services if you had to make the decision today?' My answer would still be 'yes—absolutely!'"

Iris Bernier
Director of Revenue Cycle
Coastal Orthopedics



HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Partner with us at **855-510-6398** or **results@nextgen.com**.

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