

Case study

Piedmont Healthcare: Taking a CDI program to victory

Piedmont Healthcare, Atlanta

Health system snapshot



Private, not-for-profit organization



Serving communities that comprise 80% of Georgia's population



22 hospitals, 55 Piedmont Urgent Care Centers, 25 Quick Care locations



1,875 Piedmont clinical physician practice locations



More than 2,800 Piedmont clinic members

3M technologies

- 3M™ 360 Encompass™ System for CDI

The growth of a program

In 2012, Piedmont Healthcare started its clinical documentation integrity (CDI) prioritization journey with just two facilities and four CDI specialists responsible for reviewing only Medicare cases. By July 2019, the program grew to include 11 facilities and more than 35 CDI specialists prioritizing cases using length of stay (LOS) and working diagnosis related groups (DRG) for all payers except self-pay and charity care. With the additional facilities and staff the team switched to 100 percent remote work which allowed the CDI program more opportunities to sustain its success. By April 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, CDI specialists were already equipped using LOS and working DRGs to prioritize all admissions except obstetrics, pediatrics and NICU cases.

Prior to implementing the **3M™ Advanced CDI Prioritization** feature of **3M™ 360 Encompass™ System**, Piedmont used the 3M working DRG priority feature. The list created a challenge for the CDI specialists to truly find the most impactful cases, and led to the need for an evolved prioritization process.

“We believed in looking to the future.”

–Lori Dixon, director of CDI, Piedmont Healthcare

Looking to the future

With the potential to find the most impactful cases, the Piedmont team was excited to optimize other features in 3M 360 Encompass. With the unique situation that COVID-19 presented, Piedmont wanted to take the CDI program to the next level to achieve these goals.

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With high admissions, mandated paid time off for employees and required review rates holding at 80 percent, “we believed in looking to the future,” said Lori Dixon, director of CDI. Knowing the staff did well at adjusting to changes, Piedmont became an early adopter for the 3M Advanced CDI Prioritization and **3M™ Automatic Impact** features, part of 3M 360 Encompass. Using these new features allowed the Piedmont team to start:

- Reviewing the most impactful cases
- Prioritizing follow-up reviews
- Improving documentation with artificial intelligence (AI) auto-suggested codes and queries
- Simplifying the reconciliation process for accurate financial impact
- Reporting vital CDI metrics to administration and each individual CDI specialists

Priority launch – Practice makes perfect

With COVID-19 in full swing, it was more important than ever to review cases that had the most potential to make a financial or quality impact. If the CDI teams were reviewing 80 percent of cases, leadership wanted to ensure that 80 percent truly needed to be reviewed.

Piedmont decided to start with the 3M default settings for prioritization and emphasized education up front, including weekly leadership meetings and monthly manager meetings to review the CDI scorecard with productivity expectations. The team also set up regional super users who chose the layouts of the worklist columns, created workflow job aids and presented education.

These changes resulted in Piedmont’s CDI specialists being assigned one case at a time based on the highest priority score and follow ups were only assigned as needed, which eliminated unnecessary reviews. Case lists were re-prioritized automatically, as opposed to a manual process, to continuously place the highest priority cases at the top of the list. The CDI specialists team increased their average initials per day from 10 to more than 12 and re-reviews from 25 to 30 per day.

Real results*



50%
principal diagnoses
impact increase



6,600
major complication or
comorbidity (MCCs)
added



15%
more complication
or comorbidity
(CCs) added



193
procedures added



Reduction
in the number of
unnecessary cases
reviewed



15%
financial impact
increase

* Results from fiscal year 2022

Teams and technology working together

In 2020, when the prioritization feature was turned on, Piedmont also started using the 3M Automatic Impact feature. The CDI team learned different query scenarios for missing diagnosis, clinical validation, present on admission (POA) and the necessary reconciliation steps. Having 3M Automatic Impact allowed managers to validate impactful cases and do case reconciliation concurrently before the bill dropped, saving valuable time each month.

"There was a learning curve over the next months supported by ongoing department, team and one-on-one education, which supported the successful use of the impact ROI tab," said Gail Higle, clinical documentation manager.

Piedmont collaborated with both 3M and Epic to make sure the coder's Epic estimated reimbursement interfaced directly into 3M 360 Encompass.

CDI for the win

After two years of implementing both 3M Advanced CDI Prioritization and 3M Automatic Impact, Piedmont saw an increased value in fiscal year 2022. This led to an estimated 15 percent financial impact increase on claims reimbursement, all while maintaining the number of admissions reviewed (~73,000), query rate (25 percent) and physician response time (1.5 days).

Keys to success



CDI scorecard with productivity expectations



CDI and coding buddy system



Facility physician advisors



CDI leadership and department continuous collaboration



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