

CASE STUDY

Improving Patient Access and Clinical Productivity at Akron Children's Hospital



BACKGROUND

Health care organizations nationwide are facing a similar problem. While the demand for care is at an all-time high, hospitals are also dealing with clinical workforce shortages. Many are struggling to bridge the gap between higher patient volumes and limited access to care as a result.

Akron Children's Hospital, a prominent pediatric health care provider in Northeast Ohio with more than 50 primary and specialty locations, was struggling to support care coverage needs while also improving clinical productivity for its staff of more than 1,200 physicians and advanced practice providers (APPs).

Despite hiring additional clinicians, patient access continued to decline – which prompted the hospital to explore new strategies. With the implementation of an innovative physician compensation management solution from Clinician Nexus, Akron Children's Hospital was able to support its transformative journey to improve patient access, streamline clinical productivity, and create a more transparent and data-driven incentive compensation program.

This case study highlights the challenges faced, the road taken, and the outcomes achieved after one year of utilizing Clinician Nexus' Compensation Management platform.

CHALLENGES

Despite increasing the number of physicians and APPs, Akron Children's Hospital saw a continual decline in the percentage of new patients seen within 14 days. The original assumption was that hiring more clinicians would help to support growing patient demand, but access metrics continued to deteriorate.

These key issues included:

- Work RVU productivity below the 50th percentile for certain specialty groups.
- Ineffective value-based incentive program – which didn't adequately drive improvements in access or productivity.

- Burdensome administrative processes and lack of transparency in reporting which caused dissatisfaction among clinicians.

While the hospital's original incentive program combined value-based and productivity metrics, it failed to drive meaningful change. Clinicians could earn additional compensation for hitting only the 25th percentile in work RVU productivity without additional incentives to reach the 50th percentile. Although this plan included 'access' goals focused on reducing issues caused by controllable provider absences, such as personal events, it didn't directly address the hospital's growing patient demand.

Furthermore, other metrics included in the plan, such as patient satisfaction and department-chosen quality projects, were not only complex to track and burdensome to administer, but they also didn't address critical issues like appointment availability or the decline in productivity.

SOLUTION

In order to truly 'target' patient access and clinical productivity and improve these metrics in a meaningful way, Akron Children's Hospital needed a technology solution to help support their strategy with actionable, transparent, and data-driven insight into performance. This allowed the organization to streamline its incentive structure to support greater clinical productivity and thus increase patient access and appointment availability. By utilizing an automated compensation management system to track and aggregate productivity metrics at both the individual and group levels, the hospital was able to provide its clinicians with clearer connections between pay and productivity while also incentivizing them to reach these goals with greater insight into their progress.

"Prior to implementing Compensation Management we were dealing with a number of issues. To start, there simply wasn't enough information or it was either wrong or unreliable. We needed a system that could provide accurate data in a more transparent way to engage providers and create meaningful improvements in patient access and productivity."

Stephanie Chambers, Senior Director of Provider Business Services, Akron Children's Hospital

OUTCOMES

After one year, Akron Children's Hospital saw significant improvement in:



Patient Access – The percentage of new patients seen within 14 days increased from **29% to 34% across 18 specialty groups.**



Template Utilization – Expected hours templated (available for patient scheduling) rose from **63% to 81%** with improvements anticipated to continue as additional groups optimize their schedules.



Productivity – Hours per month per clinical FTE increased from **53 to 58** and led to more available patient visits. Additionally, **productivity improved from the 41st to the 44th percentile.**

These results were driven by the introduction of group-based metrics that incentivized providers to work together to meet access and productivity goals. By focusing on group outcomes, such as the percentage of new patients seen within 14 days, the hospital saw greater provider engagement and motivation from clinicians to achieve common objectives. Clinician Nexus helped to support these changes by providing the data and insights needed to measure results and track progress on these metrics.

CONCLUSION

Keeping patient access and provider productivity front and center as demand increases is critical to making sure every patient gets the care they need when they need it. Akron Children's Hospital successfully leveraged Compensation Management from Clinician Nexus to address these challenges.

By shifting its incentive structure to focus on group metrics, ensuring accuracy through automated data tracking, and providing greater transparency in reporting, the organization achieved measurable improvements in both areas. As Akron Children's Hospital plans to refine its approach by expanding the use of metrics to primary care and surgical subspecialties, Clinician Nexus continues to support the organization in its ongoing journey to provide patients with best-in-class care.