

How Do You Identify and Collect \$3 Million in Outstanding Charges?

Valley Health found a way using The SSI Group's ClickON® E-Verify and ClickON® Net Eligibility software for eligibility verification.



Case Study

Using The SSI Group, Inc.'s (SSI) Eligibility Clearinghouse, Valley Health's Patient Accounting staff identified more than \$3 million in billable charges in 2008 from 1,600+ accounts that would have otherwise gone through the collection process and, more than likely, ended up as uncollectible bad debt.

"We identify these accounts on an ongoing basis by sending a Microsoft Excel file to SSI once a month with the prior three months worth of self pay claims," said Bonnie Sarver of Valley Health Patient Accounts. "The reason for doing this is that Medicaid 'retros' their approved eligibility effective dates and we have found that most of them are done within this time frame. Once a year (January) we submit a file containing the entire prior year worth of self pay data.

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Bonnie Sarver of Valley Health Patient Accounts

"This process also indicates whether the Medicaid coverage is an HMO and where the claim needs to be filed. "This process helps us with our State/Local Hospitalization (SLH) claims since SLH is active for six months," Sarver continued. "If a patient is identified as having SLH, we can view the prior accounts and bill accordingly."

Each encounter was sent through this eligibility process and submitted to the payer. As a result, \$1.6 million - or approximately 54 percent - of the \$3 million has been collected.



About Valley Health

Valley Health (VH) is a network of hospitals and treatment centers serving the residents of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, West Virginia and Western Maryland. More than 500,000 patient encounters are logged each year at VH, and the system has a combined annual revenue in excess of \$600 million. For more information about Valley Health, please visit www.valleyhealthlink.com.

This has been an ongoing process for Valley Health for six years and is an automated service SSI can provide utilizing ClickON® E-Verify and ClickON® Net Eligibility software through the company's Eligibility Clearinghouse, which connects to hundreds of payers. In fact, this process of identifying self pay accounts that qualify for Medicaid can be accomplished with any payer, including Medicaid, Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans and commercial payers.

The cost to run this type of program is minimal, but the return is outstanding and is one factor in keeping A/R days low, according to Sarver. "We still conduct the up-front eligibility verification at registration, and the ones that go through registration are not part of the \$3 million billed out," she said. "That figure is based strictly on the batch file that is sent to SSI in an Excel format. The only manual work in this process is actually adding the insurance information and requesting the rebill for processing." Sarver, who tracks four separate facilities, has found the numbers to be quite impressive. "Over the last five years, we have been able to bill more than \$15.9 million and recouped approximately \$8.5 million. The savings are actually more than that, since we have cut out mailing the statements to patients and our staff's time to pursue the patients directly."

SSI is the industry's first organization to achieve CAQH Committee on Operating Rules for Information Exchange (CORE) Phase I rules certification seals, accomplishing the feat as both a clearinghouse and software vendor. By committing to CORE's Phase I rules, SSI pledged to electronically exchange patient eligibility and benefit information according to the CORE operating. These operating rules simplify the eligibility verification process, enabling healthcare providers to submit a benefit/eligibility verification request and receive a response within 20 seconds from CORE-certified healthcare organizations.

About The SSI Group, Inc.

The SSI Group, Inc. (SSI) is a national, diversified information technology company established in 1988. It maintains corporate headquarters in Mobile, Ala., and branch facilities in Clearwater, Fla.; Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colo.; Chesapeake, Va., and Nashville, Tenn. With approximately 385 employees and 2,200-plus clients nationwide, SSI leads the healthcare field in healthcare claims management technology, EDI platforms and networking. ClickON® technology has more than 200,000 built-in edits, delivers HIPAA-certified transactions from Claredi, is EHNAC certified and has 800 payer connections. As a testament to the company's leadership, the company's technology processes 250 million transactions annually, totaling in excess of \$300 billion. The company offers a wide range of provider/payer/physician services and technologies for managing the revenue cycle - claims processing (ASP/Direct/Clearinghouse), document management and business office outsourcing for paper claims. For more information about SSI, please visit www.thessigroup.com.

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