

PPMO-0048 College of Dentistry Point of Service Management Process Improvement [UIC] Executive Summary

Business Case

The College of Dentistry (CoD) hopes to reduce its insurance and patient accounts receivable by increasing its accuracy of claim submissions and increasing collections from patients and insurance companies, thereby reducing its allowance for bad debt. Also, the College of Dentistry hopes to reduce negligent write-offs on accounts receivables by improving daily operations leading to increased revenue.

Goal

Key Objectives

- Objective 1: Decrease amount of patient charges sent to collections
- Objective 2: Increase % of patient charges collected at time of service
- Objective 3: Decrease % of write-off's based on insurance denials
- Objective 4: Decrease revenue cycle duration for insurance submissions

Approach

The Core Team mapped the five major operational processes at the College of Dentistry (Scheduling, Registration, Check-In, Check-Out and Claims & Collections). Throughout the project, focus groups were conducted with Faculty, Staff and Students to identify issues and causes, opportunities for improvement were identified and potential solutions were brainstormed. The Core Team developed a transition action plan to prioritize potential solutions, assign owners to tasks, and established a timeline for implementation.

Outcome

Identified four short-term recommendations, focusing on communications, process, staffing and training. Implementation is anticipated by February, 2018. Identified three long-term recommendations emphasizing a potential Centralizes Scheduling model, policy updates and faculty responsibilities, with implementation on an ongoing basis.

Key Findings

- **Communications:** Need to expand and update all internal and external communications resources
- **Policy:** Need to re-cascade certain policies internally to refresh education of current and new personnel
- **Process:** Need for new processes and streamlining of current processes to save time and money
- **Staffing:** Need for targeted hiring, particularly in Billing & Finance, to claw back monies to CoD
- **Tech/Systems:** Need updates to axiUm system to ease and improve data input, processing and reporting
- **Training:** Need to expand and enhance training for Staff and Students on process and system requirements

Short-term Improvement Recommendations

1. **Execute an internal and external communications campaign/strategy** – *by leveraging the new Marketing department for updates patient's via the website and more, use of EZ Markit for patient reminders, using waiting room television monitors to share "real-time" information to patients, by providing translation support via Google Translator and glossary, and create updated, improved and consistent internal documentation and reference sources for all staff, faculty and students.*
2. **Bolster CoD operational processes** – *including Scheduling, Registration, Check-in, Check-out and Claims & Collections, emphasizing reductions in redundancy, providing revised scripts ("checklists") to prioritize critical patient information, initiating as much preliminary patient verification prior to day of service, more modeling of best practices, and providing improved reporting to better understand and manage performance.*
3. **Expand Staffing Strategy** - *to ensure there is appropriate Clinic coverage during peak hours by targeting key positions for reallocation, hire 3 Insurance Verification Specialists, hire 1 Collections Specialist and hire 2 Insurance Denial Specialists.*
4. **Expand Mandatory Training** - *across the UIC CoD and integrate it into the curriculum –to include training in the areas of Scheduling, axiUm modules, Clinic Best Practices (within and outside of the college), Procedure Codes, Cancellations/No Shows, Cross-Training, Proper Patient Medical History, Financial History Notation and overall Staff Development.*

Long-term Improvement Recommendations

1. **Create a Centralized Scheduling Team** – *(via current resources reallocation) dedicated to managing all aspects of UIC College of Dentistry patient scheduling.*
2. **Create and Enforce UIC College of Dentistry Policies** - *establishing a culture of accountability and professionalism, particularly for Attendance, Communications, Patient Information, Locked-Out Patients, Faculty Office Hours, No Shows/Cancellations, Students/Residents Blocking Chairs, Scheduling Patients, Guardian/Guarantors for Patients, Consent Forms, Phone Policy, Doctor Overrides, Late Arrivals.*
3. **Emphasize Importance and Responsibilities of Faculty** – *reinforce the role of Faculty to be present for increased evaluation and screening of teaching patients thereby reducing "challenging" patients, expanding time with Students to review complex cases for treatment plans, and ensuring Faculty helps validate the accuracy of Student treatments and procedure codes, will all result in increased information accuracy and increased payment from patients.*

Implementation of Recommended Improvements

Short-term recommendations are currently being implemented with most activities scheduled for completion in February of 2018. A total of 203 actions were identified for implementation. To date, 99.5% of solutions actions are either completed or in process. Only .05% haven't been started and they primarily related to staff hiring.