NUANCE

Taking a more cohesive approach to clinical documentation

Ardent℠
HEALTH SERVICES

CHALLENGE:
– Need for a more proactive approach to identify documentation improvement opportunities
– Current patient acuity metrics not reflective of the actual patient population
– Cumbersome post-discharge inquiries and retroactive coding reviews

SOLUTION:
– Dragon Medical One
– Dragon Medical Advisor
– Epic NoteReader CDI

RESULTS:
– Provided CDI support at smaller facilities without dedicated CDI staff
– Allowed CDI staff at larger facilities to concentrate on more complex cases

Ardent Health Services is a national healthcare company with facilities across six states. The organization focuses on providing premier health care services, delivered with compassion and respect for patients, their families, staff and providers. The organization's network comprises 30 hospitals throughout OK, TX, NM, NJ, ID, and KS, with over 4,300 licensed beds and more than 26,000 employees. Ardent is committed to providing its hospitals and clinics the necessary tools to produce high-quality care and extraordinary results.

"We needed solutions to work across settings to provide value at scale—and introduce new proactive improvement opportunities."

— Kristi Richison, Director of Strategy and Operations, Ardent Health

Laying the foundation for documentation improvement
Ardent Health Services was already a Nuance transcription customer when they decided to pursue a more cohesive approach to clinical documentation. Given its size, complexity, and varying levels of staffing, Ardent was focused on streamlining provider workflows with their Epic EHR, improving documentation quality, and making better use of staffing resources.

"We have several small facilities with less than 100 beds that simply don't have the volumes to justify a dedicated CDI staff," said Kristi Richison, Director of Strategy and Operations. "We needed solutions to work across care settings to provide value at scale—and introduce new proactive improvement opportunities."

Working with Nuance to determine their priorities, Ardent chose a suite of solutions, which included Dragon Medical One, Dragon Medical Advisor, and Epic NoteReader CDI. These technologies each offered specific advantages such as greater automation, reduced alert fatigue, and improved user satisfaction. But collectively, their real power was helping capture more complete patient stories.

Coordinating deployment of complementary efforts
Dragon Medical One offered Ardent providers an AI-powered, cloud-based solution that creates a consistent and personalized clinical documentation experience. The Health Information Management team's next step was figuring out how to harness these capabilities and make the most of their investments.

Ardent turned to Dragon Medical Advisor and Epic NoteReader CDI to help ensure that care was represented accurately and completely. "While clinicians are concerned about immediate clinical outcomes, it's easy to miss details that can dramatically affect how care is categorized and ultimately reimbursed," said Richison.

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>
> — Adrienne Younger.
>   Assistant Vice President,
>   Clinical Documentation
>   Integrity

Real-time, in-workflow guidance

Dragon Medical Advisor is a Computer-Assisted Physician Documentation (CAPD) solution that engages physicians with evidence-based advice that fits naturally into their existing workflows. It allows physicians to add important specificity details to existing diagnoses and discover evidence of undocumented diagnoses.

The Ardent team determined the guidance to activate within markets, specialty groups, and service lines for optimal results. "We want the automated guidance to improve overall documentation, and help eliminate alert fatigue and cumbersome post-discharge inquiries," said Richison.

CDI feedback at the point of care

Epic NoteReader CDI is a CAPD solution that uses Nuance technology to help teams more accurately describe the quality of care provided and properly capture patient acuity with less retrospective coding queries. The solution identifies clinical indicators within a patient's record to help improve severity-adjusted quality scores and capture appropriate reimbursement and risk adjustment factors.

After the Diagnosis-Related Group (DRG) is first assigned, it may not be reviewed again—even if there are obvious clinical indicators of another diagnosis. This technology runs queries as the patient progresses to make sure things aren't missed and helps prioritize clinical improvement efforts.

"The tool runs the standard queries and alerts physicians to check specific charts—giving us the benefit of CDI insight even where we don't have dedicated staff," said said Adrienne Younger, Assistant Vice President, Clinical Documentation Integrity. "Additionally, with the tool analyzing for the most commonly missed opportunities, sites with CDI teams can focus on more complicated cases," said Younger.

Delivering results

After just eight months, the Ardent team reported a shift in Severity of Illness (SOI) and Risk of Mortality (ROM) from the extreme level 3 to 4 by 41% and 49%, respectively. The adjusted patient acuity also provided visibility to other chronic conditions that can affect subsequent patient care and quality measures. "Our priority is our patients," said Richison. "Anything we can do to help identify, document, and address vulnerabilities earlier in the process is a win."