

Improving CDI performance at North Kansas City Hospital

CDI Interim Staffing offers practical support during program transition.

Challenge

- Leadership and staff transition created CDI knowledge gap
- CDI program on autopilot with existing staff
- CDI efforts and outcomes highly scrutinized by new executive team

Solution

- CDI Interim Staffing with proven approach to clinical documentation excellence
- Advanced Practice CDI™ guidance, technology, and leadership development

Results

- Provided CDI team with Advanced Practice CDI skillset
- Increased Medicare case reviews by 50%
- Removed functional silos and aligned case management, coding and quality teams

North Kansas City Hospital proudly serves its community with everything from neonatal intensive care to home health and hospice care. The organization is staffed by more than 3,000 employees, and over 500 physicians, representing 46 medical specialties—all dedicated to offering a lifetime of care.

North Kansas City Hospital had a robust Nuance CDI program for nearly a decade. However, an executive change left the team without a leader who understood the true impact of CDI, and the remaining two clinical documentation specialists (CDS) were trying to do the work of six.



“The performance was strong from the start. The quality of work met our expectations, and then some. Nuance has set a high bar for our program.”

Darla Easley, Director of CDI, Case Management, and Services Lines, North Kansas City Hospital

Revitalizing CDI program

Despite their best efforts, the team started to miss productivity goals and benchmarks, and the case mix index flattened. An organizational realignment sparked renewed interest in the hospital’s CDI program and new leadership was committed to enhancing clinical quality and financial integrity through CDI.

Supporting the transition

Darla Easley, Director of CDI, Case Management, and Services Lines, understood that a knowledgeable staff was needed for the CDI program to yield the desired outcomes. Without a full complement of experienced staff, CMI would suffer, and so would her program’s reputation.

“It’s critical to have the right people asking for the right clarifications. You lose credibility with physicians if you get off on the wrong foot,” she said.

To ensure the hospital could keep the program running on a day-to-day basis while Easley on-boarded new team members, she turned to Nuance for the company’s proven CDI Interim Staffing services.

Delivering flexible staffing options

Nuance CDI Interim Staffing offered an effective solution to address Easley’s immediate resource needs during the transition as well as allow her to adjust as needed to support any future program implementations or expansions.

The interim staffing team, which included both clinical and technical experts, began work immediately. The first step was to review patient records that were not touched. “Everything was fair game,” noted Easley.

Using data to drive immediate results

When the Nuance team presented monthly CDI outcomes data, it was clear the Medicare patient charts—which were negatively impacting CMI and quality measures—were the top priority.

Using real-time analytics, the Nuance team helped identify opportunities for program improvement and collaborated on creating a go-forward strategy.

By focusing exclusively on Medicare records at first, then Medicare replacement plans, the team was able to produce a more significant impact.

According to Easley, “the performance was strong from the start. The quality of work met our expectations, and then some. Nuance set a high bar for our program.”

The CDI team now touches more than 80% of Medicare records, which represents a 50% increase from before the interim staffing engagement began. Additionally, the group consistently meets its monthly Nuance CDI benchmarks.

Easley credits the Nuance interim staffing engagement with keeping the organization’s CDI program moving forward while she focused on building a cohesive and effective team. It allowed new staff members to fully immerse themselves in the onboarding process—learning the CDS job without distraction or productivity pressures.

“The Nuance team understood our history, where we were going, and where we had gaps. Their support and guidance have been amazing,” said Easley.

A promising path forward

As Easley relaunches the CDI program at North Kansas City Hospital, there is a renewed commitment to quality clinical documentation. This experience has helped the team break down functional silos and foster better teamwork, improved productivity, and higher quality outcomes.

The organization is now working more collaboratively, with case management, CDI, quality, and coding staff, all working seamlessly to ensure each patient’s story is captured completely and accurately.

“I’m excited about the direction our CDI program is headed. Thanks to Nuance, our team is delivering the clinical quality and financial outcomes our hospital deserves.”

To learn more about Nuance CDI Interim Staffing Services, please call 1-855-367-4445 or visit nuance.com

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