



WESTMED Medical Group

Using Centricity Business PowerStart, WESTMED Medical Group maximized performance by centralizing its business office and streamlining workflow.



Solution overview

The facility

- Over 160 physicians
- Practice type: multi-specialty
- Physician owned and managed
- Based in White Plains, New York
- Eleven locations

The opportunity

Centralize business office and streamline workflow using robust revenue cycle system with rapid implementation.

The GE solution

Implement Centricity® Business PowerStart, a comprehensive package of best-practice workflows and tools preconfigured for physician organizations.

Key findings

- Staffing reduced by an estimated 20 to 30 FTEs
- Total billing costs represent 2.5% of gross revenue – less than a quarter of the industry average
- 99% collection rate on eligible billing
- Days in A/R reduced to 32 days

WESTMED Medical Group prides itself on being one of the most automated and efficient practices in the nation, with a history of successfully implementing technology to improve operational efficiency and quality of care.

In 2009, WESTMED sought to completely transform itself, becoming the first site to implement Centricity Business PowerStart. Their goal was to centralize their administrative offices, including the call center, and implement Six Sigma lean process redesign of workflows with IT at the core. “We started with a vision of how to change our corporate culture,” explains Dr. Simeon Schwartz, MD, President, WESTMED. “Then using Centricity Business PowerStart, we rebuilt our entire practice.”

Centricity Business Powerstart provides a single, easy-to-use solution designed to fit the dynamic needs of physician practices such as WESTMED. It harnesses the power of Centricity Business, a proven, powerful revenue cycle management solution, providing a comprehensive package of best practice workflows and tools pre-configured specifically for physician organizations.

“PowerStart is the result of GE’s 25 years of experience updating its products in response to the needs of the physician practice,” says Schwartz. “I can’t think of any issue that’s not addressed in this system. It has all of the bells and whistles of the most advanced products, but it’s organized in a way that the average practice can get up and running in a short time with minimal effort.”

Simplified implementation

Smart pre-configuration means fast, easy installation and low implementation costs. “Centricity Business PowerStart is really relevant for physician organizations because it takes the complexity out of the install,” explains Schwartz. “It gives us the power to manage very complicated processes with great efficiency in a centralized model.”

With PowerStart, practices at or under 150 physicians can obtain the same benefits that larger organizations experience with an install that takes far fewer resources and less than half the time. WESTMED’s implementation team comprised seven people, including the COO, CIO, and other IT and administrative staff. Schwartz estimates that it would take a typical mid-size physician practice four to five months to install.

By comparison, to do a fully customized installation of Centricity Business, a complex academic medical center would need a team of 30 to 40 people working 12 to 18 months. “By decreasing the complexity, Centricity Business PowerStart decreases the timeframe significantly,” observes Schwartz.

And that means organizations can realize the value of the new solution faster - leading to a lower total cost of ownership as well. The installation was backed by the support of a GE team. “The GE team brought a lot of experience,” says Schwartz. “They really understand the necessary workflows for this market.”

Integrated financial-clinical solution

Centricity Business PowerStart provides complete interoperability with WESTMED’s Centricity EMR system. Working together, these solutions improve workflow effectiveness and efficiency by integrating clinical, financial, and administrative information.

“The two systems work seamlessly together,” says Schwartz. “From the time the physician enters an order to the time the bill goes out the door, everything is done electronically.”

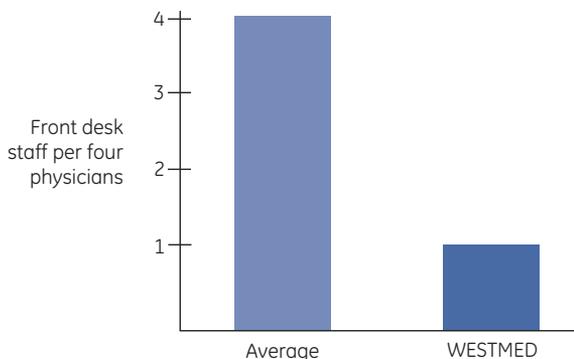
Results

Using Centricity Business PowerStart, WESTMED implemented a fundamentally new workflow design based on Six Sigma lean principles. The result is a metrics driven, highly efficient centralized process. For example, insurance information is collected in advance through a central call center. And eligibility, billing, and referral processes are also completely centralized.

By centralizing operations, WESTMED has increased staff effectiveness and efficiency, reduced expenses, accelerated reimbursement, and improved patient satisfaction. “We’ve achieved things we’ve never dreamed of accomplishing,” says Schwartz. “None of this would have been possible without Centricity Business PowerStart.”

Schwartz estimates the system will pay for itself in just over one year. “PowerStart is brilliant because it gives physician practices everything they need to realize a solid return on investment, faster.”

Increased efficiency and reduced expenses. Pre-packaged best-practice workflows have helped WESTMED become much more efficient. The biggest gain, has been at the front desk. By moving most clerical tasks to a central location, WESTMED now budgets only one front-desk staff member for every four physicians, eliminating the need for between 20 to 30 FTEs.



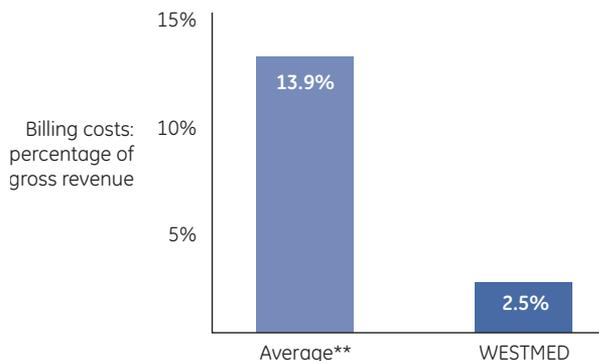
By comparison, other similar sized practices typically staff reception desks with three or four staff members for every four physicians.*

WESTMED uses PowerStart’s built-in task engine to apply best-practice workflows that address the organization’s challenges. PowerStart automates routine tasks and enables “management by exception,” pushing high-priority issues that require manual intervention out to staff for fast, efficient resolution.

This has helped the billing department become more efficient. For example, many billing questions that were previously handled by billing staff are now transferred to less-expensive customer service staff. Billing staff can now put their time to much more productive use.

*Clark Yoder, “MGMA Cost Survey for Multi-Specialty Practices 2008 Report”

WESTMED’s practice has grown significantly without a corresponding increase in the need for billing staff. Total billing costs represent just 2.5% of gross revenue – less than a quarter of the industry average.



**According to the HASC Summit on Administrative Simplification Final Report – July 2009

Accelerated reimbursement. Through proactive monitoring, automation, and standardization, PowerStart’s EDI (electronic data interchange) solution helps WESTMED manage the collection process using fewer resources.

The results are fewer rejections, faster turnaround times, and reduced days in accounts receivable. WESTMED collects almost 99 percent of money it is eligible to collect, including bad debt. Accounts receivable have been reduced from 39 to 32 days.

“There’s a wealth of information we can get out of PowerStart,” reports Schwartz. “Everything is now metrics driven. At any given time we know the percentages of eligibilities we don’t have – by doctor, carrier, biller – everything we could possibly want to know. Running our business without it would be far more difficult.”

Increased patient satisfaction. Centralizing administrative and clerical tasks has resulted in a much more pleasing patient care environment in the physician offices. “It has changed the entire tone of our practice,” says Schwartz. “Patients notice how quiet it is. It creates a much nicer atmosphere.”

PowerStart’s patient portal has also improved patient satisfaction by providing patients with 24/7 access to more accurate, updated information about their care, such as access to test results, as well as secure messaging with providers. Patients can also schedule appointments, pay bills or request prescription renewals.



“We’ve achieved things we’ve never dreamed of accomplishing. None of this would have been possible without Centricity Business PowerStart.”

– Dr. Simeon Schwartz, MD
President
WESTMED

About WESTMED Medical Group

In January 2010, WESTMED Medical Group was certified as a Level III Patient-Centered Medical Home – the highest achievable level – by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality. Level III is awarded for providing coordinated, efficient, and quality primary patient care, and acknowledges that WESTMED has the tools, systems, and resources to deliver the right care at the right time.

In 2004, the American Diabetes Association honored WESTMED with its prestigious Certificate of Recognition, and WESTMED was certified by the NCQA for their Diabetes Physician Recognition Program. Other NCQA recognitions include Heart/Stroke, Physician Practice Connections, and Physician Organization Certification in Credentialing and Recredentialing.

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