

A trusted RCM partnership improves financial performance and clinical quality outcomes

CHALLENGES

With three companies using three disparate EHR systems, Prisma Health lacked visibility, standardization and financial performance across agencies.

By the fall of 2020, after a merger, Prisma Health, a not-for-profit health organization in South Carolina, had three different companies on three different electronic health records (EHRs), with AR also split across three systems. This meant separate revenue cycles and financial reports that left them with zero visibility, a lack of standardization across agencies, and limited collections. The results were significant underperformance when it came to financials and low Star ratings, signifying clinical quality issues.

Prisma Health turned to MatrixCare to standardize and streamline processes across their entire organization — and they achieved higher Star ratings and increased revenue along the way.

In search of a trusted partner

The primary reason Prisma Health sought outsourcing was significant aging AR at their Columbia location and across their home health and hospice services. Liz Snyder, Executive Director of Home Health, Hospital at Home and Hospice, remembers this challenging time.

SOLUTIONS

With HEALTHCARE*first*, now known as MatrixCare, Prisma Health gained a team of revenue, coding and OASIS documentation review experts who led them to increased Star ratings, improved cash flow and a near-perfect collection rate.

“We had a lot of AR on the books in our Columbia market, with a lot of human resources dedicated to the revenue cycle,” said Snyder. “The question just started to be asked — how do you have all of this staff dedicated to a home health and hospice agency and so much AR is sitting out there?”

Prisma Health needed trusted revenue experts to help them better manage cash flow. After a thorough RFP process with three vendors, MatrixCare came in with a winning proposal based on their pricing, quality review, coding, and clinician education.

The common hesitation to outsource was never an issue for Prisma Health. While many companies shy away from trusting outsiders with revenue management, Snyder and her colleagues understood the value of outsourcing versus keeping it internal. “If you’re only half on board, you can find all kinds of reasons not to stay with the external vendor just as easily as you can find reasons to stay with them and continue to grow. It really depends on where your mindset is.”

A culture of getting everyone onboard

Offering both one-on-one and group education, the transition to MatrixCare was a smooth process and went well beyond the shift to outsourced RCM and clinical documentation review. Education and training are continued through the partnership to help keep every facet of the organization in tune with new regulations and compliance measures.

“In addition to group education for OASIS version changes, such as the most recent change to OASIS-E,” explained Landace Woods, RN, MSN, NEA-BC, Director, CQI and Accreditation, Post-Acute Care for Prisma Health, “we had significant immediate improvement in OASIS outcomes with one-on-one training for team members who had more corrections than others.”

To maintain the integrity of their program, reviewers make the OASIS changes directly in the software program and the OASIS clinician accepts or rejects the change before the OASIS advances to the next step of the process.

On the coding side, education is also provided directly to clinicians, fostering a culture of inclusivity, where all roles are considered when it comes to the outsourced RCM process.

Open communication was the key to success

While weekly meetings may seem like a common occurrence for any business partnership, the commitment to connect regularly is MatrixCare’s hallmark to successful long-term partnerships.

“From a quality aspect, keeping the chain of communication open was key to success. And that occurred with weekly operational reviews,” said Woods.

These meetings opened discussions to gain an initial understanding of what each other’s needs were and have since moved on to occur monthly. Here, they continue to explore creative ways to tackle the latest challenges. And where most companies would say “no,” MatrixCare is known for their openness to finding new solutions.

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“I appreciate a company who doesn’t overcommit without thoroughly thinking through a request and that’s what we have always received with MatrixCare. You don’t always get the ‘yes, we can do that,’ but you always get the ‘let us think through it and get back with you,’” explained Woods. “It’s always genuine and I appreciate that about the business partnership.”

MatrixCare’s Jeremy Crow, Head of RCM and Survey, understands the importance of this approach to outsourcing relationships. “We allow ourselves to be flexible to meet or exceed the customer expectation. Then if we can tweak to address a specific business problem, that’s where the partnership comes in.”

Slow and steady wins the race

For long-term, lasting results, Prisma Health needed to trust the process — and they did. While it’s been a long road, their patience and dedication has paid off, and they found a true partnership along the way.

“We can’t fix everything all at once, so we’re going to incrementally improve. And I felt like that was on both sides — you achieve goals one bite at a time,” said Snyder. “Even when we bit off a little more than we could chew, we were still working incrementally to move the needle in the right direction.”

When entering the next phase of optimization in home health, Prisma Health didn’t hesitate to ask MatrixCare for a new approach. The partnership was built sustainably and there was always trust and willingness to lean into creativity.

“There’s a quick approach to it and there’s a structured, canned approach to it and there’s the way we did it here,” said Woods. “I don’t know which way I’d do it again, but I know this way has worked.”

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Significant results for a significant partnership

Their slowly evolving process was worth it. Prisma Health and MatrixCare built a deeply trusted partnership that worked together to create solutions to challenges, both significant and small.

When concerned about the lack of profitability per episode of care due to visit utilization, the MatrixCare clinical quality team assisted Prisma Health to get visit utilization in line with the needs of the patient. In the end, their visits per episode decreased, leading to a higher profit margin while sustaining good patient outcomes. This is just one example of the ability to find opportunities for improvement and work together to create real, tangible results.

“Overall, denials have gone down since starting new processes,” said MatrixCare’s Amy Buckner. “We identified some issues around the authorization, but we’ve brought in more revenue as those things have cleared themselves out and we’ve found good workflows.”

The result is that staff can focus on other operational and clinical needs — driving big improvements across the board.

* Data Period: 2021 - 2023

RESULTS

Prisma Health found a trusted partner in MatrixCare, working together to improve financial performance and develop a culture of trust.

- > Increased cash flow
- > Improved Star ratings
- > A near-perfect collection rate

Since onboarding with MatrixCare, Prisma Health has seen many significant wins*, including:



Significant decrease in monthly AR

\$10M AR/month → \$6.8M AR/month



Increase in average revenue per episode

\$1,800 → \$2,500



Significant improvements in Star ratings

Columbia location 2.5 → 4

Greenville location 3 → 4

Sumter location 3 → 4.5

99% **Collection rate**, adjusted for contractals

This partnership has been a thoughtful approach to truly effective outsourced RCM, and has been used across the greater Prisma Health system as something to emulate and learn from.

“It’s taken time,” Woods explains, “but it’s allowed the culture of the team to grow together to appreciate the values and the vision to move forward.”

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