

CASE STUDY:

HOSPITAL BOOSTS CODING ACCURACY AND EFFICIENCY WHILE REDUCING COST

ONE CUSTOMER'S CODING JOURNEY

Making the switch

Jennifer Johnson, HIM Director for Phelps Memorial Health Center, was looking to replace her logic-based coding system with a smarter, simpler, more cost-effective solution. After seeing a demonstration of TruCode's knowledge-based encoder, she was thoroughly impressed and moved ahead with deploying the software.

Old habits disappeared

At first, veteran coders were hesitant to make the switch. The coders were used to relying on their previous system's logic pathways to arrive at a code. However, transitioning to TruCode took a lot less time than they expected, and the coders really appreciated it once they were comfortable with the new encoder. "It really didn't take too long for them to get used to TruCode and retrain their brains. Now they absolutely love it," says Jennifer Johnson.

The switch to TruCode also made it easy for new coding professionals that were hired, because the knowledge-based methodology more closely aligned with their training.

Most importantly, the hospital's coding accuracy improved significantly. With their previous encoder, average coding accuracy was 92%, but after switching to TruCode, average accuracy increased to 98%, exceeding the hospital's goals.

Streamlined usability

With built-in resources and references, coders no longer had to waste time opening additional webpages to locate the information they need. Suddenly, it's all right in front of them. The TruCode Encoder automatically presents critical coding information to coders when and where they need it, all within a single screen. With fast access to edits and prompts, the quality of coding went up drastically. In fact, chart return traffic from billing was reduced by 80%.

Our coding quality has increased from 92% to 98%, and we've seen significant improvements in productivity as well.

– Jennifer Johnson,

HIM Director for Phelps Memorial Health Center

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About Phelps Memorial Health Center

- 25-bed, non-profit, critical access hospital located in Holdrege, Nebraska
- Implemented TruCode in 2018, replacing their logic-based encoder

Prior Challenges

- Coders hesitant to switch encoders, having 20-plus years of experience with a logic-based encoder
- Cumbersome process for accessing references, inhibiting productivity and coding quality
- Workflow challenges delaying days not final billed (DNFB)

Results

- Coding accuracy increased by 6%, from 92% to 98% on average
- Coding productivity increased significantly
- Realized approximately \$15,000 in annual license fee savings
- Number of charts returned from billing department reduced by 80%
- Maintained coders' skill sets more effectively than logic-based encoder

Significant license fee savings

One of the biggest factors in making a decision is always cost. TruCode's license fees offered significant savings compared with their current encoder vendor and included all of the features and functionality the hospital needed, including over 15 coding references. Best of all, the hospital saved approximately \$15,000 in annual license fees when they made the switch. For Jennifer Johnson, it was easy to select TruCode because the encoder had so much more to offer at such a competitive price point. Jennifer said, "I feel like with all the options that TruCode provides, we actually get more for our money."

Fully customizable

Features like code sets allow clients to customize TruCode to fit their specific needs. Phelps Memorial Health Center was able to group codes that are frequently assigned together to streamline the coding process. For example, Phelps assigned code sets for the most frequently used codes for specialties like pulmonology and urology, which helps improve coding efficiency. Additionally, TruCode's custom coding advice feature has allowed Jen to link custom prompts to codes, to help coders adhere to certain guidelines. This was especially helpful when they opened a new wound clinic which introduced new coding practices for her team.

Free monthly refreshers

With such an immense number of features, it's easy to lose track of just how much TruCode has to offer. The company hosts free monthly training sessions with CEUs for its clients, which cover product changes and other industry developments, ensuring users stay up to date with TruCode and continue to get the most out of the system.

Great support team

Customer service representatives are ready to respond to inquiries and always do so in a timely manner. "The customer support that I get from TruCode is wonderful," said Jennifer. "I can email them, and I will hear back from them in a very timely manner, and they're very accommodating."

Worth the switch

With so many benefits, it's easy to see why so many hospitals are making the switch from a logic-based encoder to a knowledge-based encoder.

// I would definitely encourage all hospitals to switch over. I think it's better for your coders. With all the features that you have right there at your fingertips, it's so worth it. //

– Jennifer Johnson,
HIM Director for Phelps Memorial Health Center

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