

## Mission Health System makes dramatic improvements with CAC and concurrent coding



### With the Optum™ Enterprise Computer-Assisted Coding Platform, Mission Health has achieved:

- \$297,000 average increase per month in DRG reimbursement
- 30% decrease in discharged not final coded (DNFC) inpatient and observation cases greater than five days, going from \$6.9 million to \$4.3 million
- 43% increase in case review by Clinical Documentation Specialists
- Case mix index increase of 2.4%

### Overview

With the transition to ICD-10 on the horizon, Mission Health System in Asheville, North Carolina, wanted to take a proactive stance to protect productivity and revenue.

“Our vision was to prepare for ICD-10 by identifying a solution that would mitigate the anticipated loss in coding productivity and ensure accurate reimbursement,” says Susan Hoyle, Coding Manager – Inpatient/Observation, Mission Health System.

At the same time, Mission Health’s physicians had long advocated for concurrent coding to fully leverage electronic progress notes, identify opportunities for documentation improvement and reduce post-discharge queries.

Susan and her team needed a solution that could:

- **Empower concurrent coding** and enable concurrent querying
- **Mitigate productivity and revenue loss** anticipated with the transition to ICD-10
- **Leverage an intelligent natural language processing engine** that could recognize and understand context and sentence structure, to improve documentation accuracy

"The Optum™ Enterprise Computer-Assisted Coding (CAC) Platform impressed us with its national natural language processing (NLP) engine that is continually enhanced by other facilities' input," Susan says. Together, Mission Health and Optum360 partnered to bring Susan's vision for more efficient, accurate, productive coding to life.

## Solutions and Results

### Making Concurrent Coding a Reality

"Moving to concurrent coding was a key driver for us in seeking a computer-assisted coding solution," says Susan. "The coming of ICD-10 provided yet more motivation to have our new processes in place prior to the addition of the thousands of new codes the change will bring."

Mission Health chose the Enterprise CAC Platform because of its unique ability to do more than simply generate codes based on key terms. "The Optum360 patented LifeCode® NLP technology reviews all text, including electronic progress notes," Susan explains. "The NLP engine is the 'brains' of the Enterprise CAC system and actually recognizes sentence structure to understand medical terminology and context."

The result is more intelligent code suggestions, which are constantly enhanced as the system is informed and improved by input from Mission Health and other facilities around the country. The benefits for Mission Health's physicians were almost immediate.

"Our physicians could finally truly leverage electronic progress notes and have codes presented to them on a continuous basis," says Susan. "Physicians are able to see more patients and capture better documentation on their charts."

As Susan, her team and physicians at Mission Health would see, the move to concurrent coding would have a remarkable impact on everything from coding queries to DRG reimbursement to clinical documentation improvement.

### Preparing for ICD-10 Tomorrow Yields Significant Benefits Today

While the deadline for moving to ICD-10 has shifted since Mission Health went live with the Optum Enterprise CAC Platform in October 2013, the change has already yielded significant benefits in the current ICD-9 world.

"While the transition to ICD-10 may have been delayed, we've already seen how the Enterprise CAC solution has delivered millions of dollars to our bottom line," Susan says.

Since go-live, Mission Health has been able to achieve:

- A \$297,000 average increase per month in DRG reimbursement attributed to timely querying of physicians
- A CMI increase of 2.4%, resulting in additional annual reimbursement of approximately \$4 million
- A 30% decrease in discharged not final coded (DNFC) inpatient and observation cases greater than five days, going from \$6.9 million to \$4.3 million
- A 43% increase in case review by Clinical Documentation Specialists

Mission Health now uses Enterprise CAC in all areas of their flagship hospital, including inpatient, outpatient, surgery and emergency room departments. The consistent approach to coding across the institution is significantly streamlining workflows and improving outcomes.

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— Susan Hoyle,  
Coding Manager-  
Inpatient/Observation,  
Mission Health

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### Concurrent Coding Increases Reimbursement, CMI, Productivity

Leveraging Enterprise CAC has led to the calculation of more accurate working DRGs, which has several downstream benefits. “We’ve seen a decrease in unnecessary chart reviews, and have been able to increase the effectiveness of the queries we are making to physicians,” Susan says. The increase in queries has led to an average monthly increase in DRG reimbursement of \$297,000. “Querying physicians concurrently also reduced the number of days cases are being held post-discharge,” Susan explains, resulting in a 30% decrease in cases not coded more than five days post-discharge.

Where Mission Health has seen the Enterprise CAC Platform make the greatest impact, however, is on CMI. “The biggest return on investment for us has been an increase in our case mix index of 2.4%, which continues to grow thanks to the ability to do concurrent coding and querying to our physicians,” Susan says. The improvement is significant, considering that a .01 gain in CMI provides \$1 million in additional reimbursement to Mission Health.

Along with other initiatives in place, concurrent coding is also driving improved productivity of Mission Health’s CDI team. Susan reports that her CDI staff has been able to review 43% more cases per day than before the implementation of the Enterprise CAC Platform. “It’s a big time-saver,” says Susan. “Our CDI productivity continues to climb and we’re looking forward to seeing that increase even more when we add Optum™ CDI 3D to the platform.”

Finally, Susan feels more confident than ever that the Enterprise CAC Platform will yield additional benefits once ICD-10 goes into effect. “Having the platform and concurrent coding in place before ICD-10 goes live positions Mission Health for a much more successful transition,” Susan says. “We’re gaining confidence in the system now, so when ICD-10 goes into effect, we’ll be able to take on additional responsibilities and not lose ground.”

### Outstanding Support and Partnership

Throughout the implementation, training and continuous improvement, Susan has been impressed with the support and partnership of Optum360.

“Our IT lead said it was the easiest implementation she’d ever been through, and it was a truly successful and uneventful go-live,” says Susan.

Identifying a system that would be simple for coders to learn and use was always a priority, and Susan shares that the Optum360 training exceeded her expectations. “Training was wonderful; with many of our staff working remotely, being able to do the training online and bring up shared screens at a moment’s notice was fantastic. Our trainer was excellent and is still a great resource,” Susan says.

As Mission Health continually refines processes, provides input on NLP updates and more fully leverages clinical documentation improvement opportunities, Susan’s strong and responsive partnership with Optum360 makes it possible for her to continue to work toward her vision.

“Optum360 truly listens,” she says. “The support and attention we receive are the crowning jewels to this relationship. Optum360 works hard to understand us and our workflow. We’re constantly working together to discuss enhancements or improvements. After the implementation, that customer service and partnership really makes a difference—it’s one of the main reasons I’m confident recommending Optum360 to my peers at other facilities.”

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“We’re now looking forward to fully integrating our coding and CDI teams by adding the Optum CAC Workflow Module and Optum CDI 3D, so we’ll be able to realize multiple benefits from a single, completely integrated user interface.”

— Susan Hoyle,  
Coding Manager-  
Inpatient/Observation,  
Mission Health

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## Moving Toward a Seamlessly Integrated System

Once Susan and the coders, CDI specialists and physicians at Mission Health began to see the benefits of using the Enterprise CAC Platform, they realized the exponential improvements that a completely integrated system could bring.

“We’re now looking forward to filling out our Optum Enterprise CAC Platform by adding the Optum CAC Workflow Module and Optum CDI 3D,” Susan says. “Right now, we have to keep opening multiple windows and systems, so being able to do coding, automating case assignment and identifying and prioritizing CDI opportunities—all from the same unified solution—will be huge.”

With the power of the fully integrated Optum360 CAC and CDI 3D platform in place, Susan looks forward to seeing even more dramatic results. It’s yet another step in the partnership between Mission Health and Optum that is allowing Susan to make her vision for concurrent, accurate and efficient coding and revenue capture a reality.

### About Mission Health

Mission Health, based in Asheville, North Carolina, is the state’s sixth-largest health system. Mission Health operates six hospitals, the flagship of which is Mission Hospital, comprising 730 beds on two campuses; a medical staff of more than 750 physicians; and 6,000 employees and nearly 700 volunteers. Learn more at [www.mission-health.org](http://www.mission-health.org).

### About Optum360

Optum360 is a leading provider of patient-centered and client-focused revenue cycle services. With a comprehensive suite of technology, content and services, Optum360 is helping modernize health care financial transactions to make navigating the health system and understanding medical costs simpler and more transparent and intuitive for everyone.

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Learn how the seamlessly integrated Optum360 CAC and CDI 3D solutions can improve results for your organization by emailing [Optum360@optum.com](mailto:Optum360@optum.com) or visiting [Optum360.com/EnterpriseCAC](http://Optum360.com/EnterpriseCAC)

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