

Order automation eliminates missing data and improves workflow

Aegis Sciences Corporation embraces electronic orders to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and increase satisfaction

The shift from paper requisitions to fully electronic orders helps Aegis Sciences Corporation increase process efficiency, enforce standardized workflows, reduce administrative costs, optimize resource utilization and increase physician and patient satisfaction.

Challenge

Aegis Sciences Corporation is a fast-paced organization that processes specimens for a broad range of healthcare facilities. Their dedication to process improvement and technological advances has supported their significant year-over-year growth. Aegis saw an opportunity to enhance their work processes and improve client satisfaction by moving to an electronic ordering solution from the standard paper-based laboratory orders typical in the laboratory arena. They required the solution to be fully paperless and focused on providing tools at the point of collection that would support their downstream processes.

Paper requisitions create opportunity for illegibility, missing identifiers/demographics or "write-ins" on non-designated areas of the form. Aegis had previously resolved these issues through color-coding and highlighting important sections and aligning form sections for demographic/insurance information.

However, despite these efforts, Aegis collected attestation statements to clarify and validate orders for up to 2.8% of samples tested due to missing or illegible information received from the collection site.

While this may seem like a small percentage, Aegis' continued focus on process improvement led them to take action to improve order quality, capacity, reduce administrative costs, incorporate user enhancements and optimize its resources. Through careful evaluation of potential failure modes, quality improvement goals were identified and addressed the limitations of non-validated, handwritten forms and manual data entry.

Other workflow improvement goals focused on increasing capacity and administrative efficiency, enabling Aegis to keep pace with increased sample volume. They also aimed to manage administrative costs, specifically reducing time per requisition and the amount of paper they handled.

Solution

Aegis evaluated the solutions of several companies in order to judge their ability to meet the same superior science and service standards. They wanted to partner with an established organization in which they had confidence, that had unparalleled customer support and offered a proven and well thought out solution.

After careful review and deliberation, Aegis selected Experian Health's Web-based physician order service, **Order Manager** (formerly OrderSmart®), which connects community physicians with hospitals to improve patient and provider satisfaction. This centralized outpatient and surgical order tool facilitates order validation and management by electronically submitting, receiving, communicating and tracking all physician orders.

Order Manager identifies and collects appropriate financial papers such as waiver forms, Advanced Beneficiary Notifications (ABNs), scheduling status and results communication. One of the features Aegis liked most about Order Manager was that it was easy to require compliance with specific data fields at the collection site.

Aegis Sciences Corporation

“With Order Manager, we’re now able to offer a fully paperless process to our clients and require certain fields be completed, such as all demographics, diagnosis code, etc., which are necessary on the front end,” said Sarah Coble, Project Management Organization Director.

During the training and implementation process, Aegis worked closely with an Experian Health project manager and development team, participating in weekly conference calls to discuss any issues and bring up beta sites to test the application. Within three months of beta testing, the Aegis team went live with a full Order Manager rollout.

Sarah traveled to each clinic to personally host onsite training and implementation. She also hosted a “Super User” training session to “train the trainer” and create a team of experts to facilitate future rollouts. This approach proved very effective and allowed the solution to be tailored to the demands of each individual clinic. The ongoing communication and feedback helped make for a smooth and successful implementation.

Results

Prior to implementing Order Manager, the manual nature of paper requisitions created difficulty at the point of collection. Aegis had several robust processes in place to ensure error opportunities were resolved and appropriately handled at the time of specimen receipt, including obtaining attestation statements. Order Manager allowed Aegis to initiate these checks earlier in the process, at the time of collection, to minimize delays.

After implementing Order Manager, Aegis eliminated illegible testing requests and reduced attestation statements by 76%. Overall, process efficiency was even more impressive, including:

- 1 minute per sample processed saved during accessioning
- 38 seconds per sample saved during demographic entry
- 23 seconds per sample saved by auto-uploading electronic requisitions in Forensic Records

Other process improvement results include:

- Eliminating paper for laboratory orders for both Aegis and clients
- 5% improvement in initial insurance identification
- 27% reduction in samples requiring follow-up for omitted demographic information
- Enabled enhanced capacity planning and resource utilization as samples in transit were visible from the moment of collection

Insurance information is now carried through Aegis' billing system into Order Manager, with an electronic attachment for supporting documentation directly to Aegis' EMRs/EHRs.

Strategic Benefit

Order Manager was originally adopted for electronic laboratory orders, and their successful results have been shown to other departments within Aegis. This has opened up opportunities to use the orders and scheduling solutions in other departments where it might not have made sense initially. The dedication to continuous improvement and evaluation of their processes to ensure client satisfaction has led areas like Managed Care and Accounting to evaluate the impact of these tools on their metrics as well.

In the end, it was Aegis' unwavering commitment to workflow improvement, testing accuracy and customer satisfaction that helped them implement and coordinate Order Manager across the entire enterprise and improve their financial clearance and pre-service workflows.

“The Experian Health and Order Manager teams were key to helping us realize our vision of a fully paperless process that could improve our workflows and processes to keep pace with our exceptional growth. The work we have done together has been critical to supporting our quality goals as an organization.” said Coble.

About

Aegis Sciences Corporation, headquartered in Nashville, TN, is a healthcare sciences company with services that support professional and amateur sports, healthcare providers, medical examiners, and businesses. With more than 1,000 team members, Aegis processes over 100 million results annually, servicing more than 2,500 clients across the U.S.