

Over 7% increase in patient collections for Wooster Community Hospital with Collections Optimization Manager

Key results

7.75% increase in patient collection in just 1 year of implementation.

12% decrease in bad debt over previous year.

\$800K discovered in Medicaid coverage.

413 hour reduction in manual processing of financial assistance cases.

Wooster Community Hospital is a 173-bed full-service and acute-care facility in Wayne County, Ohio. Its mission is to provide accessible, quality healthcare services with compassion, dignity and respect. As it serves the residents of Wayne County, the hospital aims to achieve patient satisfaction ratings of 90% or higher. It uses the MEDITECH EHR platform to manage patient information and streamline financial and clinical processes.

Challenge

Wooster wanted to improve patient collections to make better use of staff time, create a positive patient financial experience and bring more dollars in the door. Like many busy health systems, they decided to outsource their self-pay collections process to external collections agencies. However, this was not ideal as the vendors had their own problems in terms of staffing and training. Patients also did not like receiving communications from external vendors which led to patient dissatisfaction.

“Our patient community was dissatisfied with having an outside entity handle our collections, leading to numerous complaints. Our patients expressed that if they consistently paid their bills on time, then why are we still bothering them? Our CFO wanted a more customized approach to collect from our patients without disruptive collection practices. This was the driving force behind our decision to bring the self-pay collection process in-house.”

- Kristen Shoup
Revenue Cycle Director at Wooster Community Hospital

A one-size-fits-all collections strategy doesn't make sense when no two patients have the same financial circumstances. Shoup and her team realized this early on and needed a way to differentiate their collections strategy based on their patients' unique financial situation.

With a lean team of just five people, Shoup wanted to improve the collections process from start to finish with better insights into patients' propensity to pay and with automated patient communications and payments.

Wooster Community Hospital

Resolution

Wooster opted for Experian Health's Collections Optimization Manager to identify and collect patient balances more efficiently. Combining this with PatientDial, PatientText and PaymentSafe® gave the team additional tools to support patients and accelerate collections.



Tailor collections strategies with advanced propensity-to-pay scores

With Collections Optimization Manager, Wooster's staff can segment patient accounts into 5 tiers based on their propensity-to-pay scores. This enables staff to work efficiently by identifying early which patient segments require minimal effort and resources, and which groups need additional collection efforts. It also helps staff understand the volume of uncollectible patient accounts and identify those needing financial assistance.



What makes Collections Optimization Manager's segmentation unique?

Many solutions rely only on historical payment data to determine a patient's propensity-to-pay score, which can be inaccurate if there's no prior health encounter on record. However, with Collections Optimization Manager, Wooster gains access to comprehensive propensity-to-pay scores derived from various sources, including health payment history, credit information, socioeconomic factors, and behavioral data.

Using these insights, staff at Wooster have been able to create an engagement strategy for each patient segment. It keeps costs low while delivering a better experience for patients, who are no longer subject to catch-all collections efforts.



Reach more patients, faster, with automation

One of Wooster's goals was to increase productivity and cash collections by minimizing time spent on patient communications. Now, they use the segmentation data generated by Collections Optimization Manager to automate patient outreach with PatientDial and PatientText and focus on accounts with the highest likelihood of recovery.

Shoup noted that staff were spending hours trying to contact patients who were either unavailable or not answering calls from unknown numbers. PatientDial addresses this issue

by automating outbound collections calls with interactive voice response (IVR). This allows patients to receive the information they need without speaking to an agent and to call back at their convenience. Patient information then automatically pops up on staff screens, enabling them to handle inbound calls more efficiently. Additionally, the queue callback feature reduces patient hold times.

Recognizing that not all patients prefer phone calls, Wooster has successfully implemented alternative communication channels. With PatientText, staff can send automated text messages regarding collections and billing, which include secure payment links.

Shoup elaborates, "Since adopting PatientText, Wooster has seen a significant decrease in the patient complaints. The segmentation data allows us to send personalized, non-intrusive texts at convenient times, which has greatly freed up staff time and resolved patient issues."



Collect any payment, anytime, anywhere

Wooster rounds out the process with PaymentSafe®, offering patients a range of secure and convenient payment methods. The team collects payments anytime, anywhere, including through IVR, mobile, kiosks, and patient portals. By making it easier for patients to pay, Wooster collects more revenue earlier in the collections process, without needing additional staff effort.



Dedicated expert support to optimize collections strategies

To optimize Wooster's collections strategy, an experienced Experian Health consultant works closely with Shoup and Wooster's staff, offering tailored advice, benchmarking insights and performance reviews to identify areas for improvement.

Shoup praises the impressive ROI her consultant has provided to her leadership team and says,

"The reports provided by our consultants immediately demonstrate the financial benefits to the CFO and VPs, clearly quantifying the improvements in our collections process."

Wooster Community Hospital

Results



Increased patient collections by nearly \$4M within a year

- Wooster increased their collections by **\$3.8 million in just one year** through segmentation and automated outreach -- a 7.75% increase over the previous year.
- Approximately **12% of this growth** was due to automating outbound calls with PatientDial.
- While around **38% was attributed to PatientText's automated, personalized messages** that direct patients to their payment portal.

In total, **automation accounted for 50% of the collections.**



Increased patient satisfaction

Moving the collections process in-house has eliminated nearly all patient complaints that Wooster used to receive. Shoup shares, "Without a doubt, having this process managed entirely by our own staff and within our own community has proven to be an outstanding success."



Cut bad debt by almost \$700K

Because Collections Optimization Manager automates the presumptive charity process, staff can easily identify accounts that need charity adjustment, allowing Wooster to cut bad debt by \$682,851 over the same period. That is an decrease of 12% from the previous year.

Additionally, Wooster's staff no longer needs to manually determine charity qualifications. The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) percent score is now displayed directly on their screens. This automation has saved 413 hours of manual work, showcasing the efficiency gains from optimizing staff time with this solution.



Discovered an extra \$800K in overlooked Medicaid coverage

An additional benefit is the ability to identify if patients are eligible for Medicaid support or if they have forgotten secondary coverage that could reduce their out-of-pocket expenses. Experian Health extracts and screens self-pay accounts without Medicaid coverage, accounts with Medicare coverage but no secondary coverage, and zero-balance charity-adjusted accounts. It then provides Wooster with a file listing any additional billable coverage.

Find out more about using Collections Optimization Manager alongside automated patient outreach to increase collections, boost productivity and improve the patient experience.



Wooster Community Hospital

About Experian Health

Hospitals, health systems and physician groups have come to rely on Experian Health for revenue acceleration and profit gains through automation, cleaner claims, fewer underpayments and a reduced cost to collect. At Experian Health, we serve more than 60 percent of U.S. hospitals and more than 7,500 medical practices, labs, pharmacies and other healthcare providers to simplify healthcare with data-driven platforms and insights that help our clients make smarter business decisions, deliver a better bottom line and establish strong patient relationships.

Collections Optimization Manager: Discover how Collections Optimization Manager helps providers assess patient payment capabilities, enabling informed decisions on which accounts to prioritize, write off, or refer to collection agencies.

PatientDial: Automate your patient communication strategy, elevate your patient satisfaction and reach out to more patients with our cloud-based dialing solution.

PatientText: PatientText provides a customizable text messaging service for healthcare providers to streamline patient outreach, collections, payments, and engagement. It includes automated outbound messages with a link to the patient portal and contact number, requiring minimal staff input.

PaymentSafe®: PaymentSafe is Experian Health's payment processing engine that provides an efficient and seamless way to process patient payments. It connects to your technology to collect point-of-service and online collections.

