

Case Study >>>

NextGen EPM's WorkLog Manager Automating Many a Practice

Jim Mitchell, Managing Partner/COO of Enterprise Medical Management, was reluctantly about to hire another full-time employee just to research overdue and unresponsive accounts with outstanding balances. First, though, he considered the tools in his office. He realized NextGen Healthcare's enterprise practice management system (NextGen EPM software), with its unique WorkLog Manager feature, could likely handle this responsibility. Within a few days, the program was identifying these delinquent accounts and automatically tasking the responsibility to appropriate billing personnel. Mitchell had just saved tens of thousands of dollars a year and increased his practice's efficiency and potential for previously uncollected revenue.

Mitchell's is one of countless practices using WorkLog Manager's capabilities to automatically generate tasks, organize a practice's processes, decrease costs, and add significant additional revenue.

Overview

PRACTICE

- Enterprise Medical Management
- HeartPlace
- Integrated Healthcare Associates

BUSINESS PROBLEM

Inefficient workflows, A/R follow-up, and claims processing.

SOLUTION

Utilized NextGen® EPM software's WorkLog Manager functionality.

PRODUCT DISTINCTIONS

- Manages tasks end-to-end
- Actually performs some tasks
- Instant access to encounter
- Full reporting on tasks

BENEFITS

- Saves processing time
- Eliminates missed revenue
- Optimizes staff performance
- Aids operational analysis



NextGen EPM software is, at its core, an electronic billing and scheduling system, but cutting-edge features such as WorkLog Manager take practice management to a new level, automating and monitoring many of the routine tasks and processes that are normally resource-intensive, paper-driven, time-consuming, and error-prone.

WorkLog Manager can automate typical workflows such as:

- Referral management
- Chart pulls or prep
- Lab results
- Collection and A/R functions
- Claims submissions
- Scheduling and pre-registration
- Check-in and check-out
- Authorizations and eligibility verification
- Appointment reminders
- Insurance underpayment

How Does It Work?

WorkLog Manager sends tasks to staff, telling them what to do, when, and how. Most importantly, it measures whether they did it. Specifically, WorkLog knows to assign tasks when an 'event' takes place. An event may be an appointment made, a claim sent, missed information, etc. When one task is completed, WorkLog may auto-create new tasks to other users to continue the flow of work. Users may also efficiently generate groups of tasks from a report with one operation. By eliminating needless communication, instruction, and oversight, WorkLog saves time and money.

Multiple Uses, Multiplied Results

In another notable example, HeartPlace, with 21 locations in Dallas-Fort Worth, decreased staff by nine positions through automated tasking. Using WorkLog for insurance verification, HeartPlace reduced staff from 14 to 8. In addition, tying reason code libraries to follow-up tasks, payment posting staff dropped from 6 to 3. Total savings: \$257,000 annually.

In WorkLog Manager, task assignment is highly specialized, with certain responsibilities assigned to specific staffers because of expertise (e.g., one employee may handle all follow-ups for a specific payer). The result is more efficient operations through immediate, direct delivery, and increased revenue through completion assurance and process-time reduction.



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Also, unlike other task-creation programs that simply generate a task and hope it gets performed, WorkLog Manager tracks a task from beginning to end. This crucial feature ensures no task goes uncompleted. Finally, WorkLog Manager's Auto Worker feature actually performs a task instead of just allocating it, for such work as small balance write-off and reclassification of A/R. If one imagines this work savings of hundreds of tasks a day multiplied by many employees, the magnitude of this efficiency becomes highly apparent.

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, Integrated Healthcare Associates (IHA) uses WorkLog Manager to manage all A/R. Using NextGen EPM software's electronic claims editing and submission capability, claims at IHA requiring additional information are tasked to specific employees to process. Users then drill into the encounter through the task to analyze, gather, and input needed data. Previously, employees from various departments or locations constantly faxed back and forth to identify and deliver the necessary information, but often, items were not followed up or completed, and filing limits were missed. Now, nothing is missed.

Another practice reported that WorkLog allowed it to grow 22% without increasing staff.

In addition, new employee training time decreased from 13 days to 5, and time required to complete month-end procedures decreased from four full days to four hours.

The practice's productivity rose so much it reduced overtime costs by 84.5%.

Where it previously took many human hours, at times lasting a week, to process problem claims, it now takes an average of 5-10 minutes total per claim. IHA set a goal of completing every claim within 48 hours. Benchmarked initially at 76%, it rose to 95% with tasking. IHA also saw a dramatic decrease in rejected claims. In May 2004, before WorkLog, they had a 5% rejection rate. By December 2005, it was 2%.

With 50,000 claims monthly, this meant hundreds of hours and tens of thousands of dollars saved. Furthermore, days in A/R dropped from 56 to 35, which resulted in a \$2.7 million cash surge. WorkLog Manager also measures staff performance. Task Analysis reports all tasks, summarizing by number or percentage open, completed, and more. High percentages of open tasks can uncover areas to target for improvement. Tasks summarized by role (collector, scheduler, etc.) or individual user can suggest resource reallocation.

Additional Benefits

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