

MAXIMIZING A REFERRAL NETWORK WITH SIMPLIFIED PROCESSES

The Christus Health Children's Hospital of San Antonio provides advanced medical services to more than 150,000 children across Southern Texas each year and provides a number of specialized programs to suit the individual needs of patients and their families. From top-of-the line Neonatal ICU capabilities, to counseling and therapeutic services for children in all stages of development, Christus Health extends whole-health treatment from professionals who care.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

Christus Health was looking for a centralized referral management solution with the potential to maximize its referral network and standardize internal processes. They wanted to improve the fax and phone referral workflow so that staff could process referrals more efficiently no matter the volume, resulting in shorter appointment wait times for patients and significantly improved patient follow-through.

Christus Health's first objective was to establish a process for creating a referral appointment at time of ED discharge and then guiding that patient through the continuum of care. The organization has six locations across the city and continues to grow, so streamlining the referral process was the top reason for selecting Blockit. Christus Health was previously challenged with a disjointed referral process sometimes tracked in various systems and different methods for sending referrals such as fax and phone or, as with most busy systems, providing nothing more than the business card of the recommended specialist. This was difficult to manage and scale and also led to low follow-through rates.

The second objective was to improve internal communications and close the loop with referring providers on the status of their referrals. Lastly, Christus Health wanted to effectively manage its referral partner network and leverage real-time analytics to better inform the overall system strategy to best accommodate the needs of the community.

RESULTS

The Christus Health Children's Hospital of San Antonio went live with Blockit in October 2019 for Orthopedic referrals only. At that time, they were able to report on approximately 133 referrals from 3 referring locations in the prior 4th quarter for comparison. When comparing 2018's 4th quarter numbers with 2019's 4th quarter, they saw these results:

- Referral volume increased from approx 44 to 160 per month
- Patient follow-through rate increased from 38% to 78%
- Days between referral created and appointment fulfilled decreased from 7.3 days to 4.5
- Average referrals were booked within 4 minutes
- Zero phone calls or faxes were required to complete a referral
- Referral activity added approx \$50,000 per month in additional revenue

CHRISTUS HEALTH HAS EXCEEDED ALL OF ITS OBJECTIVES RELATED TO THE BLOCKIT IMPLEMENTATION:

Streamlining the fax and referral management process

This objective was accomplished by centralizing and standardizing the referral workflow and setting up seamless integration with real-time access to specialty providers. In addition, managers leveraged real-time analytics to report on referral process time, patient wait time, and follow-through so they could identify and resolve bottlenecks in the process.

Closing the feedback loop with referring providers

This objective was accomplished through the system's automated process of providing referring providers with real-time status of the patients referred by them. The automated status dashboard not only keeps referring providers in the loop on the status of their patients, it also serves as a dynamic communication vehicle for provider to provider real-time chat, captured within the patient referral. The automated referral status updates and instant chat features also drive operational efficiencies for both the referring provider and specialist by eliminating unnecessary phone calls and faxes.

Managing the referral partner network more effectively

This objective was accomplished by leveraging the system to identify the best provider by availability, proximity to patient's residence, insurance eligibility, and, if necessary, language. Appointments are chosen by sending provider requirements and patient preference by leveraging the diverse provider profiles and availability within the provider directory.

ABOUT BLOCKIT

Blockit enables high performing healthcare networks to attract, engage, and retain the right patients, caring for 50% more of them in half the time. Leveraging existing EHR investments Blockit's digital care coordination platform significantly improves healthcare outcomes by seamlessly closing the referral loop, significantly improving patient follow-through, and drastically reducing administrative overhead.

