

Caldwell Memorial Uses SCI Power to Transform Processes

Caldwell Memorial Hospital (Lenoir, N.C.) is a 110-bed acute care facility whose mission is to provide safe, effective, compassionate care and to promote healthy lifestyles in its community. Rising from manual, paper-based processes, the hospital now has progressive users of the latest healthcare IT solutions to improve Patient Access operations. Caldwell has been a Schedule Maximizer® user since October 2001 and an Order Facilitator® customer since December 2006. In 2010, it became a "Power Access" user to provide even higher levels of efficiency for its patients, physicians and staff.

Power Access: Combine Scheduling with Orders

Coming from a manual (paper) scheduling environment, Caldwell is now a shining example for how to put "Power Access" into practice!

Through Schedule Maximizer, Caldwell is scheduling for Cardiac Caths, Cardiopulmonary, CTs, Nutrition Therapy, Radiology, Ultrasound,

Nuclear Med, Financial Counselors, MRI, PET Scans, the Breast Center, inpatient/outpatient surgeries at the hospital, surgeries at the Surgery Center; and pre-op appointments. Soon it will add IV/Infusion Center and Pain Clinic to the list. The schedulers at Caldwell are responsible for verifying eligibility and benefits on patients' insurance, creating an estimate of charges for the service being scheduled, checking patients' bad-debt status, making sure the practice is obtaining a pre-certification if needed, and informing patients of their financial responsibility at the time of scheduling. Schedulers also put patients in contact with financial counselors when the need arises.

With **Schedule Maximizer's** advanced scheduling automation capabilities, Caldwell now:

- Reduces time to schedule from 10 minutes to two minutes
- Increases appointment volumes to over 2,500 per month
- Supports front-end financial clearance capabilities at the time of scheduling

With **Order Facilitator's** online order communications automation capabilities, Caldwell can:

- Eliminate paper order hassles
- Verify Medical Necessity every time
- Alert all parties to payer authorization rules
- Send the physician office real-time updates on orders and patient appointments

After the individual successes of Schedule Maximizer and Order Facilitator; the logical progression was to merge the two workflows for even better efficiency. By embedding order management into Schedule Maximizer Caldwell's orders are

now automatically matched with scheduled appointments. This streamlined automation has dramatically reduced the manual efforts associated with both receiving orders and matching orders to appointments. Also, Advanced Beneficiary Notices (ABNs) are now managed more effectively through a simple process of printing them to a portable document format (pdf) from Schedule Maximizer and then saving them electronically in Order Facilitator.

Getting Even More POWER out of Power Access

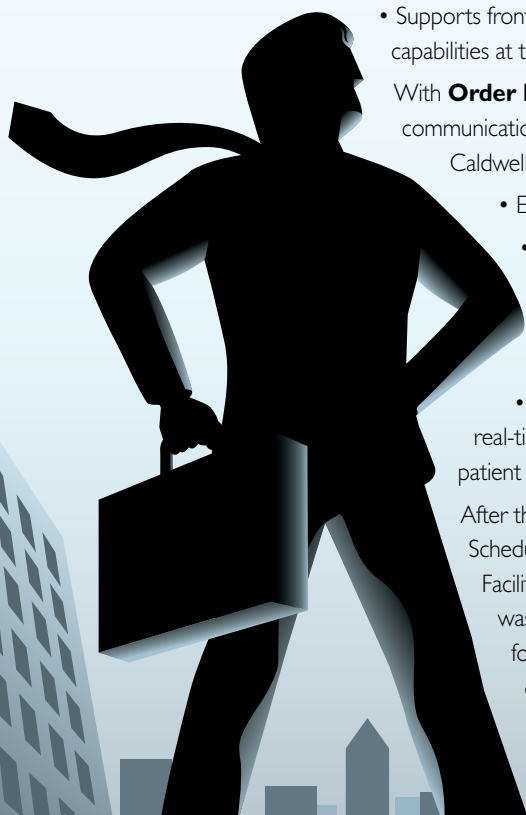
Caldwell is now thinking outside the box when it comes to using its Power Access products. It is using Order Facilitator on the clinical department floors and the Emergency Department (ED). The Nursing Units and the ED are set up as groups in Order Facilitator and the tools serve two purposes:

1. Orders: From the unit or the ED, if the patient being discharged needs outpatient testing, then the user will place the order(s) into Order Facilitator for the patient to be contacted and scheduled for the test.

2. Referrals: If a patient presents without a primary care physician, the ED will send an electronic referral via Order Facilitator to a rotating list of groups accepting patients. The referring office will contact the patient and schedule an appointment.

Wide-ranging Results

Transforming its Patient Access environment from "paper to power" has made Caldwell Memorial Hospital more efficient, by creating improved electronic processes that increase productivity without the need to hire and train more schedulers. The move also signals the beginning of increased utilization and improved physician satisfaction and an enhanced patient experience.



Real-Life Patient Access

Online Orders Come to the Rescue for **Northeast Georgia Health System**

Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS) (Gainesville, Ga.) is a not-for-profit community health system dedicated to improving the health and quality of life of people in Northeast Georgia. Through the services of its medical staff of more than 500 physicians, residents enjoy access to one of the state's finest and most comprehensive medical systems. Motivated to create higher levels of service for all its customers—physicians, internal staff and, most importantly, patients, "Exceptionally Responsive" became the organization's mantra. It set the goal of obtaining the physician order prior to scheduling to allow for the completion of pre-registration and financial liability processes before every patient visit with the additional objective of notifying patients of their appointments. The mission was clear—Implement Electronic Orders and let the orders initiate a complete scheduling process rather than chasing orders after a verbal scheduling request.

Plagued by lost orders, workflow interruptions, time wasted on the phone and faxing, NGHS's order process needed to be saved!

Starting with seven practices and covering 18 physicians, NGHS began the "script for service" initiative via Order Facilitator electronic orders in March 2009. Original departmental coverage for the Patient Access Service Center scheduling covered Radiology, Cardio/Vascular, Neurophysiology, and Spirometry/PFT diagnostic testing with the addition of Sleep Studies within six months. Expanded services incorporated PET Scans, Diabetes Education and Endoscopy procedures to the Scheduled tab.

In March 2010, SCI's Physician Referral module was activated, allowing electronic appointment requests for specialist and ancillary services. No more phone calls and clinical faxing because now pertinent information can be attached as a document similar to an e-mail attachment or copy and

paste. Physician Referral is now used for departments outside of the patient access arena to communicate, schedule and track orders in addition to enhancing the marketing capability of the ancillary departments via Order Facilitator. Scheduling requests via Physician Referral are currently used for Rehab Institute, Wound Care, Weight Loss/ Nutrition and Hospice Admissions. Recently, the Emergency Department (ED) began utilizing the referral module to coordinate appointments for patients who do not have a PCP or to coordinate a follow-up appointment with their physicians. The second phase of the ED roll out will include scheduled diagnostic testing, an effort to maintain diagnostic testing within the NGHS system.

Order Facilitator Saves the Day!

NGHS has improved physician loyalty and its patients' experience by streamlining scheduling access and workflow:

- Orders are complete, signed, and legible and provide a documentation process for training, accountability and risk management.
- Improved patient pre-registration rate—from 35% prior to Order Facilitator to 99% in June 2010, with a monthly cumulative average of 89% from March 2009. Pre-registration for calendar year 2010 was an impressive 95%.
- The number of electronic orders in the first 12 months of Order Facilitator represented 51% of scheduled tests, rising to 73% for 2010 and still climbing in 2011.
- As of March 2011, 350 physicians are using SCI to simplify patient orders.
- POS collections are up significantly over prior years since the inception of the Patient Access Model and Order Facilitator Implementation. By completing pre-registration and financial obligation as part of

the scheduling process, patients are educated and prepared to pay applicable co-pays and/or co-insurance balances. Agreed amounts are documented during the pre-registration call and reported against the collected amount at time of service.

- Scheduling administration shifted from departments and offices to the Patient Access Service Center for a one-stop shop environment.

Wide-ranging Results

NGHS internal processes have vastly improved. Every department has the ability, regardless of its varied requirements, to schedule appointments using one consistent, guidelines-driven, standard Patient Access process with documented accountability. With reliable scheduling, tighter processing and growing numbers of physician office users, NGHS expects 2011 to show that higher productivity can coexist with higher service satisfaction.

