2022 Fall member retreat

Advancing patient billing:
Progressing to consumer-driven balance resolution

Julia Egebrecht
Director, Revenue Cycle

Beloit Health System
When do you first send patient financial experience (non-HCAHPS) surveys to patients?

- After the first bill
- After a full billing cycle (2-4 statements, before agency placement)
- After first payment
- After final payment
- Three months after discharge
- Six months after discharge
- Other
- Unsure
Learning Objectives
Advancing patient billing: Progressing to consumer-driven balance resolution

• Follow one organization’s journey from a paper-based billing model to a patient experience platform that makes guarantor account resolution available through mobile devices, anywhere and any time

• Obtain a firsthand look at a pilot program for billing missed copays the day after a visit in addition to a program that allows patients to set or update household payment plans—both contributing to reduced A/R and cost-to-collect

• Discover how a patient financial experience survey can be delivered in real-time to improve back-end processes while also prompting more impactful patient outreach and service recovery
About Beloit Health System:
Located in southwestern WI right on the border of Illinois

Beloit Memorial Hospital:
- Acute Care
- Level II Trauma
- Houses specialty services for Dialysis, Counseling Care, Infectious Diseases, Family Care Center and Packard Heart Center

- Family Practice Clinics – 4 Locations (WI), 1 Location (IL)
- Sports Medicine & Occupational Health Center
- Beloit Regional Hospice & At Home Healthcare
- BHS-UW Cancer Center
- NorthPointe Health & Wellness
  - Immediate Care (Urgent Care)
  - Ambulatory Surgery Center
  - Clinics (9)
  - Diagnostic Imaging Services
  - Diagnostic Laboratory Services
  - Houses specialty services for Counseling Care and Physical Medicine
  - **New** Birthing Center – Scheduled to open Fall, 2023
Introducing your speaker:

Julia Egebrecht
Director, Revenue Cycle
Beloit Health System

Role encompasses:

- Central Scheduling
- Patient Access
- Financial Counseling
- Patient Accounts
- Revenue Integrity
Background
2020 Patient billing

Thanks for Choosing Beloit Health System.

Here’s your Bill!

- Only paper statements were being sent
- Content was ambiguous
- Online payment options were limited
- New balances and those on payment plans were on the statement
- Could be multiple pages depending on how many encounters had been placed on a particular payment plan
- Payment plans needed to be set up by Financial Counselors

“I just want to pay my bill!”

Make a one-time payment

Statement Number: 123456789
Due Date: Upon Receipt
Amount Due: $326.47
Amount Paid: $0

Please make checks payable and remit to:

Beloit Health System
1969 W Hart Rd
Beloit WI 53511-2230

Pay Online: https://myhealth.paymyhealthbill.com

Total Balance: $690.92
Payment Plan Amount Due: $25.00
Balance Due Without Payment Plan: $301.47

AMOUNT DUE: $326.47

2022 Fall member retreat
2020 Patient billing

Behind the scenes:

• Patients had to come in to meet Financial Counselors to go over their account

• Financial Counseling spent approximately 2 hours a day assigning statements to “guarantors” to replicate family billing schema

• Payment plans were constructed manually and payments had to be transferred across accounts after original posting

• Relied on patients calling during working hours to add new balances to payment plans
Reality check #1

We were relying on patients to pay their bills from paper statements.

So, we expanded our billing platform to include text and email notifications when patient balance is assigned.
Reality check #2
Statements were ambiguous and confusing for patients.

So, we cleaned up the statement to make it less confusing.
Reality check #3
Financial Counselors were doing manual work that could be more efficient through technology.

We knew we needed to implement a platform where patients:

- Can see ALL of their accounts
- Set up a payment plan
- Add other family member bills to that payment plan
- Schedule installment payments from a credit card, checking or savings account
- Make a payment on any balance
Finding a solution that does it all

Statements

• Clearer content
• Paper (only when requested by consumer)
• Electronic (embedded links in email and text)

Online Payment Options

• Immediate payments from checking, savings or debit/credit cards
• 24/7 access to pay any open balances

Payment Plans

• Self enrollment
• Open balance add-ons to payment plan
• Family billing (Combining patient balances across family members)
Transitioning focus from **statements** to **balance notifications**

**Statements**  **Balance Notifications**

- Use mobile technology to notify patients that they have a balance
- Doesn’t require a lot of information (Just the facts.)
- Drives patient directly to Patient Experience Platform
Refining statement content

We changed statement content to reflect only the pertinent information and guide consumers to pay online

– Eliminated the ambiguity of when the amount was due
– Introduced consumer to a payment plan option with the monthly amount vs total due amount
– Listed detailed information on encounter
Refining statement content

We changed statement content to reflect only the pertinent information and guide consumers to pay online

– Eliminated the ambiguity of when the amount was due
– Introduced consumer to a payment plan option with the monthly amount vs total due amount
– Listed detailed information on encounter

Visits not on a Pay Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Charges for Service</th>
<th>Insurance Payment/ Adjustment</th>
<th>Patient Payment/ Adjustment</th>
<th>Patient Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit: 123456789 DOS: 12/07/2019</td>
<td>$3,505.00</td>
<td>-$3,178.53</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$326.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient: Donald Duck Service: Gastroenterology Physician Name: Wang MD, TsuHon</td>
<td>$3,505.00</td>
<td>-$3,178.53</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$326.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$3,505.00</td>
<td>-$3,178.53</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$326.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Becoming Financial Counselors

Financial Counselors were freed up to do their **REAL** job!

- Consumer sets up their own payment plans
- Consumer assigns new balances to their payment plans
- Consumer adds new balances for other family members
Immediate benefits:

**Decreased time-to-pay:**
In 2021, the average for a patient to pay decreased from 49 to 31 days

**Cost of hardcopy statements:**
- Approximately 15,000 statements per month at $0.55 for the first page and $0.16 each additional page

**Defaulting to electronic balance notification:**
- Reduced the number of statements being sent out by 57% in the first month
- An additional 19% was realized over the next THREE months

**Consumer satisfaction:**
Patients reported approval in being able to pay their balances when and how they wanted

---

Quick and Easy

quick and simple

Helpful periodic reminders were not overbearing. Payment through the portal provided by the message was quick and easy.

This is way easier and I like the option to make payments if needed. The reminders help, too.

It was easy.
First-year results
Steering away from paper statements

Consumers actively elected to receive statements through email and text notifications.
First-year results

Engagement

Email conversion

Of the 9,491 consumers that received an email and used the embedded link, 8,731 made a payment on their open balance.

SMS (text) conversion

Of the 7,697 consumers that received a text about open balance being due, 6,773 made a payment on their open balance.
2021 projection
Paper statement-only billing

![Bar chart showing monthly projections from May to December with projected values ranging from $0K to $300K.]

- May: $214K
- June: $193K
- July: $219K
- August: $239K
- September: $182K
- October: $187K
- November: $164K
- December: $160K
2021 actual
When notifications and payment options were expanded

Consumers actively elected to receive statements through email and text notifications.
2021 actual
Of particular interest

Payments from hardcopy statements being sent into lockbox also declined
Payments from hardcopy statements being sent into lockbox also declined.

While the number of payment plans being made increased.
Innovation – Copay billing
Current state of copay collections

- Prior to service: <8%
- At time-of-service: 22%
- After claim process: 41%
Current state of copay collections

Prior to service: <8%

At time of service: 22%

After claim process: 41%

19% is Missing!
Copay collections at patient check-in

Reception/check-in

Staffing shortages resulted in lines at the counter to check in
Led to less time spent with patient to collect copay
Patients no longer had ability to pay their copay
Behavior towards staff when asking for copay changed
Collection scripting changed
Fundamentals of copay collections
Scripting prepares personnel with efficient answers to voiced concerns

Answering phones  Reception check-in  Meetings training  Universal greeting
Current state of copay collections

- Prior to service: <8%
- At time-of-service: 22%
- After claim process: 41%
Current state of copay collections

- **Prior to service**: <8%
- **At time-of-service**: 22%
- **Copay billing**: 11%
- **After claim process**: 41%
Thank you

Julia Egebrecht
jegebrecht@beloithealthsystem.org
(608)364-1615