

## **York Oncology Hematology, P.C.**

### **The Situation**

The New York Oncology Hematology offices in Latham and Rexford, New York, are medical oncology and hematology private practices that provide care to patients who have been diagnosed with cancer or one of a number of blood disorders. The offices presently have 11 and six physicians respectively, as well as full laboratory, chemotherapy, radiation oncology, and radiology units.

Patients generally undergo several procedures and are prescribed a number of medications during each visit to New York Oncology Hematology, which can result in as many as 15 to 20 charges per patient. With the number of patients who pass through each office daily and the time required to manually input patient information, the potential for errors is high. Additionally, sorting through the data collection requirements identified by a number of public and private insurance companies requires a flexible input process.

### **The Challenge**

Both New York Oncology Hematology offices have significant volumes of patient encounter data to collect and document for each patient/provider contact. Prior to scanning, the practices used full-time, key-entry personnel to perform the manual process of entering procedural, diagnostic, and other patient charges off a standard, inflexible form.

"The process was labor-intensive, required data entry re-verification, was error-prone, and slowed down collections. This affected available cash flow, personnel, and patients," said Virginia Allen, billing supervisor at the Rexford office.

### **The Scantron Solution**

Both offices chose to implement the Docuscan patient information system after learning of it through their physicians' practice management software dealer. The Docuscan system includes blank scannable documents; software for creating customized patient encounter documents; and a scanner, which recognizes and interprets data on completed documents, at each office.

Special blank forms have been designed by Scantron for data capture complexities of practices such as oncology and hematology. The blank documents are personalized according to the unique needs of each provider and their treatment protocols. Patient appointment and provider data are merged onto the documents, which are printed on a laser printer.

During a patient encounter, providers simply "bubble in" the appropriate diagnosis and the procedures conducted. An OpScan® scanner automatically reads the completed documents, which reduces both data entry time and errors. The scanned data is then automatically validated and posted into the files of The Medical Manager® physicians' practice management software.

## **The Results**

Beth Karis, billing supervisor at the Latham office, said: "Since using the Docuscan system, we've decreased the time it takes to enter encounter data by 85%, and our personnel previously assigned to perform data entry have been freed up to complete a variety of other tasks."

Allen said that at the Rexford office the Docuscan system has probably replaced the work of 1.5 employees. "For radiation encounter documents alone, it would take a billing clerk a day and a half to enter data from documents collected during the week. Now we scan the forms each day in 15 minutes or less. I don't know how we ever survived without it."

Karis said: "Initially, it was hard to get past the hurdle of trusting the system. We kept checking every form to see that nothing was missed. Its efficiency is amazing. Get it. It's the best thing that has come along."

Karis also said the Latham office has been able to maintain the size of its billing staff: "When we added two physicians to our staff, we didn't have to add more billing staff. We just incorporated them into our scanning system."

Now both New York Oncology Hematology offices process and submit medical claims within 24 hours, as opposed to the five- to seven-day backlog experienced in the past. "This quick response time has resulted in savings for the office along with improving overall efficiency," Karis said.

Allen commented that a key benefit for her office has been accuracy. "We can now tie diagnoses with specific codes," she said. "If we're not using the right code, the system tells us. As a result, we're sending out clean insurance claims."