

How to Solve Report and Form Workflow Issues

A leading behavioral health center saves time and improves care with EHR functionalities

Like many other behavioral health organizations, Coastal Horizons Center, Inc. (Coastal Horizons) located in Wilmington, NC, realized the paperwork required for patient treatment was causing labor overruns and taking clinician time away from patient care.

Caitlin Garner, assistant program director and Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Therapy (SAIOT) coordinator of Coastal Horizons, explained how behavioral health paperwork affects providers' day-to-day patient care. "There is a lot of unavoidable paperwork to get clients the care they need. There are authorization forms for care, initial intake processes, re-authorizations, and reporting that needs to be regularly updated. A complicating factor is that forms and reports must look exactly as mandated by the organization you are reporting to."

Coastal Horizons turned to Virtual OfficeWare Healthcare Solutions (VOWHS) to help solve their workflow issues with two goals:

- Create electronic workflows for forms and reports with the ability to pull information from previous forms (so each one did not need to be started from scratch)
- Integrate layout formatting into the system so completed forms look exactly like the original

"VOWHS listened to us closely and helped us transfer everything into electronic formats that help us provide more efficient and effective care," said Garner. Garner described two examples of expedited workflows developed with VOWHS:

Comprehensive Clinical Assessments (CCAs) – Previously, these reports were time-consuming because of the laborious process of re-recording patient histories. Now, information is pulled into the forms from previous years (so there is no re-keying of data) and new developments and treatment plans are quickly entered. Garner also pointed out that patients can be poor historians and often provide incomplete information about their past care. The new workflow gives a more comprehensive conceptualization of client needs and an accurate record of prior treatments, so time is not wasted trying treatments that have failed in the past.

Treatment Authorization Requests (TARs) – Gathering, processing and submitting information on paper was tedious and difficult to track. Today, the EHR aggregates information and organizes it into an electronic form that is submitted for authorization. The new process saves time and is easy to track. Further requests for information have been drastically reduced because the information is laid out in a logical and organized way.

Garner also said there are some EHR features that providers find particularly useful:

Records organized by date – Records organized by date saves a lot of time compared to searching through paper records (and inserting records into paper files). Plus, paperwork from other providers is easily uploaded and accessible throughout the system.

Electronic signatures – This feature speeds document generation. There is no need to wait for a record to be physically transferred to the provider for a signature and then returned.

Templates prompt required next steps and documentation – When additional diagnoses need to be entered into the patient record, the system now automatically prompts the necessary information for treatment goals.

What is Garner's advice to other organizations that are trying to create efficiencies in their workflows? "The biggest factor is saving time. Not only time entering data after a patient visit, but also the time when a patient is sitting in front of you. When what you need is at your fingertips, treatment is more efficient and effective. Paperwork is necessary, but redundant. Optimizing workflows allows more time for clinical work, rather than paperwork."

Want to learn more about what VOWHS can do for your organization? Contact us today at (412) 424-2260 or visit us at www.vowhs.com.