

Cardinal Health System Boosts Responsiveness, Efficiency with Elite ePay Healthcare, a Robust Online Bill Presentment and Payment Solution.

Assessment: In Brief

Challenge: Enhance CHS's statement processing approach through the implementation of an online billing solution that provides simple statement access, faster bill delivery and balance payment, and streamlined patient service operations.

Solution: Digitize the patient billing process with Elite's secure, efficient, user-friendly Elite ePay online statement presentment and payment solution.

Results: Through the use of Elite ePay, Cardinal Health System was able to substantially improve revenue cycle performance: slashing per-statement costs, decreasing days in accounts receivable, boosting the performance of its patient service staff, and increasing patient satisfaction.



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Introduction

At Cardinal Health System -- an integrated network of hospitals, pharmacies, care centers, and physician groups serving the personal health needs of individuals across East Central Indiana -- fostering an exemplary patient care experience has long been priority number one. Throughout its growth-fueled seventy-nine year history, the organization's drive for excellence has fostered a culture that expects and demands quality: from lofty patient care standards, to a focus on continuous improvement and innovation, to a commitment to being East Central Indiana's premier healthcare provider.

But meeting that commitment means there's no time for back patting and laurel-resting. Instead, CHS is constantly moving forward: seeking out emerging, leading-edge ideas, strategies, and technologies that will help it stay on top of its game and meet the demands of an increasingly competitive healthcare marketplace. So when patients began expressing an interest in electronic bill payment, CHS moved quickly to respond to their needs with a solution that offered secure, user-friendly online statement access and balance payment. And by turning to Elite for help, the organization was able to get the top-notch application security and usability they wanted, all for a very reasonable price.

The Challenge

Armed with a wealth of survey data and customer feedback, CHS was well aware of the mounting interest in online bill payment among its patient population. Patients consistently mentioned web-connectivity when asked for ways to improve the billing process. And outside research echoed this sentiment. Experts suggest that by 2012 over 60 million U.S. households will use the Internet to view and pay bills (an increase of almost 63% over current levels). Leading healthcare membership organizations have also stepped up their support of online statement solutions, emphasizing the important role these applications can play in keeping patients up-to-date on billing status and more satisfied with their revenue collection experience.

In addition, CHS revenue cycle leadership saw electronic statements as a simple, forward-thinking way to deal with the problem of constantly rising statement processing costs. Sharp inflation in the price of paper, envelopes, ink, and postage -- materials that are essential to the production and delivery of traditional print-and-mail statements -- was beginning to become like a hidden-tax on revenue cycle activities, driving up overhead and siphoning cash away from receivables. Using electronic statements to eliminate these common costly inputs would enable CHS to become much leaner and more efficient in the way that it billed and collected from patients.

Finally, the organization recognized the key role that web-enabled statements could play in helping its patient service staff step-up its performance. Their thinking? If online statement access was extended to patient service professionals through an enterprise-wide document archiving and retrieval system, then each employee would be far better equipped to efficiently, effectively handle any billing questions or issues that a patient may have. In essence, this would enable service reps to see bills exactly as they appear to patients, eliminating the unneeded confusion and frustration that was all-too-common under the organization's previous approach.

“Elite is always eager to meet the needs of their clients. Their eStatement solution is exactly what I was looking for. It is efficient, user friendly, and my customers love it. I would highly recommend Elite to any of my colleagues.”

Debbie Mace, Patient Accounts Director
Ball Memorial Hospital

The Solution: Cardinal Health System Chooses Elite

After evaluating several online statement delivery options, CHS chose Elite and the company’s Elite ePay statement presentment and payment solution. The organization’s rationale was simple: it wanted an efficiently priced, impeccably secure, user-friendly application provided by a vendor that’s proactive in searching out the newest, best, most cost effective revenue cycle solutions. Technological expertise, experience in building, implementing, and maintaining applications, a dedicated customer service staff, and quick turnaround on programming requests were all high-up on Cardinal’s viability checklist. And with Elite, that’s just what it gets.

Elite ePay is powered by web portal technology that uses modular design and 360-degree customization to provide CHS with a fully-branded solution that fits its unique requirements. Patients get secure, HIPAA-compliant access to a password-protected account center where they can view statements, adjust key account details, communicate directly with patient service representatives, and quickly process payments. And Elite’s dedicated service team ensures all programming requests are turned-around quickly and that the entire system is protected and running smoothly at all times.

The Bottom Line: Results

By using Elite ePay, CHS was able to offer its patients an online bill payment system that is at once user friendly and highly efficient. Following an initial project implementation period, CHS has experienced significant improvement in Patient Accounts performance, including:

- **Reduced Statement Time-to-Transit:** Without statement and return-mail delivery by the USPS, Cardinal’s statements get to patients sooner and remittances are received faster. The result? Days in A/R for patients making the switch from paper-to-eStatements has been lowered by an average of nearly 3 days.
- **Lower Materials Costs:** By eliminating common production and delivery costs, CHS has reduced per-statement costs by almost 56% over paper statements.
- **More Cost-Effective Service:** Elite’s customer service portal enables prompt issue resolution, easy payment processing, and quick, accurate legacy system updates. Which means that the CHS service staff is much more responsive and efficient.
- **Increased Patient-Satisfaction:** With better customer service, easier account management, fast, hassle-free bill payment, and an environmentally conscious billing policy, patients using eStatement consistently rank higher in customer satisfaction.

Elite and CHS Focus on the Future

By choosing Elite as its online statement processing vendor, CHS has further enhanced an already strong partnership. Trusting Elite to handle other critical revenue cycle operations, like traditional statement processing and tax form preparation and mailing, CHS has learned first-hand the kind of value Elite brings to the table. As Debbie Mace, Ball Memorial Hospital’s Patient Account director puts it, “My prior business experiences with Elite have always been very positive and cost effective. The quality of their work, technology and customer service is outstanding. They have never failed to meet any of my needs or requests”. Building on this solid relationship, Elite continues to collaborate with CHS to discover innovative ways to use mailstream technology to improve core practices

