

## Case Study:

# Benefits of Auto-Indexing and Auto-Data Capture for Community Healthcare Funding

## ■ NORTH COUNTRY HEALTHCARE FINDS GREATER ACCURACY HELPS SECURE AND MAINTAIN FQHC GRANTS

North Country Healthcare (NCH) has been a trusted community health resource for residents of Northern Arizona for years. In 1991 a small group of healthcare professionals established the Flagstaff Community Free Clinic. Over its 25-year history, the clinic has become a federally qualified community health system. With 16 clinics and 85 providers across the state, NCH treats more than 144,000 patients every year.

In 2012, NCH partnered with InDxLogic to solve a growing backlog of manual document intake. Besides long delay in records availability, the clinic experienced unacceptable levels of data entry errors. Unable to provide accurate reports on patient encounters, NCH suffered from underfunding from state and federal agencies.

Today, NCH has deployed InDxLogic's Document Management platform across all 16 locations. It has standardized and automated all its document intake and indexing. Besides speeding patient care, NCH can now provide accurate reporting to government agencies. This ensures NCH receives the healthcare grants required to continue serving Arizonans in need.

## ABOUT NORTH COUNTRY HEALTHCARE

### FOR 25 YEARS, QUALITY, AFFORDABLE CARE WITH INTEGRITY

The handful of doctors and nurses who founded Flagstaff Community Free Clinic in 1991 have reason to be proud of their labors. From that first facility, North Country Healthcare (NCH) has grown into a federally qualified healthcare (FQHC) system that spans Northern Arizona. Its mission, though, remains the same: to provide quality medical care to those who need it, while building healthier communities.

From its headquarters in Flagstaff, Arizona, NCH operates 16 clinics across the state, along with a growing network of cooperating providers. Its specialties include general family medicine, urgent care, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, dental care, behavioral health services and more. NCH also operates a mobile unit and provides health services to local schools, with diagnostic capabilities, including x-rays, ultrasound and telehealth services.

Despite its growth, North Country Healthcare continues to provide accessible and comprehensive healthcare in an atmosphere of respect, dignity, and cultural sensitivity.

## ■ THE CHALLENGE

### MANUAL DOCUMENT HANDLING HINDERS TREATMENT, REPORTING

North Country's growth across Northern Arizona is critical to its patients, especially those in medically underserved rural areas. Due to its growth, the health center found itself buried in a mountain of paper and manual data entry. In 2009, NCH went live with its first electronic health record (EHR) system, rolling it out to five clinics each year. While an improvement, the system relied on scanning paper records then manually identifying the document type and to which patient it belonged then importing the document to the proper patient charts.

When Anabel Ledford joined the company in 2011 as EHR Team Lead, she found the staff struggling. "Even with overtime, we were two months behind in importing patient records," said Ledford. "In Flagstaff, we had three full-time clinic workers dedicating their entire day to scanning and importing documents. But there were always stacks and stacks of paper waiting to be scanned."

Each page took only seconds to scan, but then the user had to look up the patient record and attach the document to it. The process was time-consuming and error-prone. "Frankly it introduced errors and compliance issues, when one patient's scanned records ended up on another patient's chart—a clear HIPAA violation."

NCH hired a third-party to speed the import process, but the data entry errors continued. "The contractors often entered test results incorrectly or not at all, which rendered the test useless."

Even worse, the erroneous data was having an adverse effect on NHC's quality reporting. Because NHC is a federally qualified healthcare system, it relies on grants and other government programs for funding. To receive that funding, it must report accurate patient counts, demographics and quality metrics. Since these data were often wrong or missing due to manual entry, the EHR chronically underreported the number of cases eligible for FQHC grants.

"Handling electronic records for one community clinic is challenging enough. But we'd grown to 16 locations treating over 144,000 patients a year. Weeks-long delays and errors from manually importing hundreds of documents each day was impacting our ability to properly treat patients. My team was determined to find a solution."

- **Anabel Ledford**

## ■ THE SOLUTION

### RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF TRUE DOCUMENT AUTOMATION

Everything changed when Ledford attended a Centricity Healthcare User Group (CHUG) conference in Spring 2012. There she saw a presentation by a well-known East Coast healthcare group about the efficiencies it experienced with InDxLogic DM. Ledford recounted to her CMO, "Out of everything I saw, InDxLogic is what really got my attention."

Her first thought was that InDxLogic could help clear the two-month backlog. By identifying and indexing scanned documents, they could automatically attach them to the proper patients' charts, eliminating the manual bottleneck. Giving doctors quick access to critical information would mean immediate improvements in speed and quality of patient care. It would also reduce potential HIPAA violations, by eliminating the chance of attaching a document to the wrong patient's chart.

Besides automation, Ledford also saw how InDxLogic's automation would solve other challenges, including timely and accurate encounter reports for government funding. "Tagging patient conditions in each chart was manual. I told my CMO we could set up InDxLogic to recognize both patient identifiers and case type identifiers," said Ledford. "Once it correctly tags each patient encounter, I knew our grant reporting numbers would skyrocket."

Ledford and her CMO concluded InDxLogic would not only make document handling more accurate, it would also save NCH time and money. Eliminating manual importing would reduce how much they spent on contractors and overtime. Plus, it would allow clinical workers to spend their time on the clinic's mission—patient care.

When management approved the request, Ledford contacted InDxLogic's CEO, Dr. Michael Ebaugh, and the two went to work to solve the issues NCH was facing. "That's something that I love about working with InDxLogic," she says. "I told him our issues and he said 'No problem, we'll work with you to fix that.'"

## ■ THE RESULTS

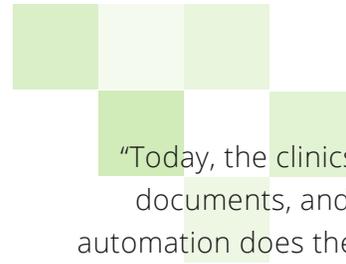
### AUTO-INDEXING ELIMINATES THE BACKLOG, RAISES FUNDING LEVELS

The InDxLogic team structured the implementation with a central database repository and individual folders for each clinic location. "That way when they scan documents, they automatically end up in the right folder. It's centralized, yet de-centralized at the same time," says Ledford.

The days of backlogs and poor accuracy are gone. Once they scan a document, the InDxLogic system recognizes, indexes and attaches it to the right chart—immediately and automatically. "The doctor can see the information in the patient's chart within minutes, allowing faster patient treatment. The speed and accuracy is amazing," Ledford reports.

Today Ledford has just one person handling exceptions for all 16 clinics. But even though document volumes are still rising, she isn't worried about having to staff up. "With all the automation, we won't need additional staff to handle it. Not even if we add more clinics."

Perhaps the greatest benefit for North Country's management is how InDxLogic helped them secure the levels of government funding a community healthcare system needs to serve its current and future patients. Now that InDxLogic automatically and properly tags each patient encounter, Ledford feels confident that they no longer underreport the volumes of care they provide to Northern Arizonans.



"Today, the clinics scan incoming documents, and the InDxLogic automation does the rest—recognizing each document type, identifying the patient, and attaching it to the patient chart. Accurately. Now doctors see the information in mere minutes, not two months."

- **Anabel Ledford**

## ■ IMPLICATIONS

In healthcare, as in every other industry, the amount of information we collect and store keeps doubling. Without automation, the time and staff required to examine, import and properly store healthcare documents must increase to keep pace. Such increases can negatively affect a clinic's patient care, compliance and even its funding. "It's hard for a doctor to provide timely, quality care when it takes weeks to get data into a patient's chart," says Ledford.

"Availability and accuracy are as critical as speed. More time and people doesn't mean fewer errors, and it certainly doesn't make it timely. Without automation, NCH's patient records' availability would be even further behind than before.

"With InDxLogic, our electronic health records are both accurate and readily available. That accuracy helps us secure the funding we need. That means we can meet our goal of providing high quality healthcare to those who need it, whenever they need it."

From the integrity of InDxLogic to the reliability of document and data management, InDxLogic DM is the most reliable Health Information Management system in the market.

## COMPANY

With more than half a century of combined experience, trusted InDxLogic partners with you to provide innovative solutions for document indexing, data extraction and HIM tasks.

## EXPERIENCED SUPPORT

Our trained support representatives provide outstanding customer support. We are committed to your success, providing our partners ongoing project management, implementation management and training, enabling you to get the most out of your InDxLogic services and software.

## SECURITY

InDxLogic uses Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology for mutual authentication, data encryption and data integrity. SSL is the industry standard security protocol to encode sensitive information, such as health and financial information.

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## LOCAL AND REMOTE REDUNDANCY

InDxLogic provides Day Forward™ secure off-site redundant data archive, so that in the unlikely event of a failure of the local enterprise server, the back up document will be available along with the most recent production data.

## ACCESS AND EVENT MONITORING

InDxLogic tools include long-term event and login access logging system. The InDxLogic system adheres to demands of regulatory compliance requirements like HIPAA, SOX, GLBA, and PCI.

Excellence in service, software and support: InDxLogic provides innovative software and services combined with full deployment and informatics support to help you offer the quality of care your patients expect.

With InDxLogic software and services, you can customize how your enterprise handles your valuable incoming clinical messages as documents. You will be able to seamlessly communicate with your clinic and enterprise information systems, greatly reducing the potential for error through manual data entry and indexing. InDxLogic will make your clinic more efficient and productive.



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InDxLogic is a complete Document Management tool that automates document indexing, incoming eFax management and chart export, including attachments. InDxLogic captures data and closes orders automatically. For Centricity CPSTM users, our new EOB Manager stores encrypted EOB documents to the CPS PM for easy research by ticket #, check # or batch#. With InDxLogic services, central management tools enable true Health Information Management.