

Streamlined Workflow Delivers Greater Staff Productivity; Patient Wait Times Cut in Half

In addition to seeing more patients with fewer staff, Panorama Orthopedics & Spine Center (Denver, Colo.) simultaneously trimmed patient wait times by half. The secret to their success is a streamlined workflow developed after the practice utilized KODAK Business Diagnostics to improve patient scheduling.

Panorama, a 21-physician practice, performs 32,000 imaging exams (or 100,000 images) annually at two locations. The practice wanted to create a steady, efficient workflow that eliminated long wait times for both patients and physicians, according to Brandi Ramirez, Panorama's Front Office Manager.

The group had previously implemented digital image capture with computed radiography systems and had installed a RIS (radiology information system) and PACS (picturing archiving and communication system). Physicians have immediate access to all digital images captured at any location. Existing film-based exams and incoming films from physicians can be digitized to provide immediate electronic access. The practice's patient management system populates the imaging worklist to eliminate manual data entry.

Even with an all-digital workflow, managers knew they could achieve further improvements by redesigning their processes. "We still had peaks and valleys throughout the day that created problems for both doctors and patients," reports Ramirez. "Our surveys indicated that our patients were extremely pleased with the care provided by our staff and physicians, but they felt wait times were excessive and we agreed with them." When these peaks and valleys were analyzed, most were due to internal processes and not driven by customer needs.



"We threw out all the old ways of doing things and worked together to create a 'perfect' schedule that eliminated all the obstacles that had previously caused delays."

— Brandi Ramirez, Front Office Manager, Panorama Orthopedics & Spine Center

A Kodak engineer met with the staff to outline each step in the process and conducted a thorough workflow study at the site. "The Kodak engineer helped us look at our workflow from an entirely new perspective. We threw out all the old ways of doing things and worked together to create a 'perfect' schedule that eliminated all the obstacles that had previously caused delays," Ramirez reports.

By analyzing historical data, the staff categorized patients according to the types of services provided, including: new patient, followup patient with x-ray exam, and followup patient without x-ray exam.

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**— Christine Wilson,
Panorama CIO**

The Kodak engineer conducted workflow studies to determine how long it took to address the needs of each type of patient, which created an average time that is automatically built into the scheduling process.

The new workflow also takes into account load balancing for staff activities. Physicians now see a mix of patients so they can meet with followup patients while other patients are having x-ray exams. Patients that need x-ray studies are scheduled at time intervals that allow the technologists to process each imaging exam. In addition, patient appointments are staggered in 2.5 minute increments to allow the front desk staff to promptly attend to each patient, and reduce the waiting that previously occurred when several patients showed up at the same time.

New Workflow Cuts Waiting by 55%

The results are impressive. Wait times were cut by 55%, from an average of 30-40 minutes to just 15-20 minutes today. Staff productivity is also greatly enhanced. The clinic reduced staff by 3 FTEs through attrition and reassignment while boosting patient volumes by almost 10%.

These efficiencies translate into an attractive return on the investment in KODAK Business Diagnostics. “We anticipate the improvement in our processes will generate close to \$200,000 in additional revenue annually,” reported Christine Wilson, Panorama’s CIO. “We’re pleased that we are able to treat more patients each day without having to compromise the quality of care each patient receives. And we are equally pleased that these changes have resulted in greater patient, physician and employee satisfaction.”

The ultimate compliment for Panorama’s workflow came from a local physician who came in for orthopaedic treatment. He was so impressed with the way his visits were conducted that he asked his office manager to meet with Panorama’s staff to help make his office both efficient and patient-friendly as well.

About KODAK Business Diagnostics

KODAK Business Diagnostics enables healthcare facilities to deliver improved productivity, dramatic revenue gains and reduced waste. The Kodak team uses lean-methodology processes to improve performance at hospitals, imaging centers, orthopaedic clinics, physician offices and other healthcare providers. These services are offered independently, and do not require the purchase of KODAK products and systems.

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