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Argus Improves Productivity, Eliminates Paperwork, and Saves More than \$ 1 Million over Five Years in IT, Infrastructure, and Personnel Costs with Ingenix CareTracker

Highlights

- The use of Ingenix CareTracker will allow Argus to save in infrastructure, IT, and personnel costs.
- Before using Ingenix CareTracker, Argus experienced significant downtime. With the use of Ingenix CareTracker, downtime has been eliminated.
- With Ingenix CareTracker, Argus has been able to reduce the amount of time it takes to close a billing period from 12 hours to minutes.
- Ingenix CareTracker has led to an increase of 14.3% in staff efficiency at Argus.
- With Ingenix CareTracker, Argus has saved \$160,000 per year in personnel costs and \$40,000 per year in IT infrastructure costs.



Challenges

Argus Medical Management (Argus) is one of the largest medical management services organizations in Southern California, servicing individual physicians, large medical groups, IPAs, MSOs, and hospitals. It offers a wide range of MSO services from total turn key management solutions to a flexible “a la cart” menu of services to clients where they can select the services they need.

Argus was providing billing services to its physician customers using a server-based system that required maintenance from its own dedicated IT staff, and also required Argus to keep a substantial number of paper-based records. This way of billing was inefficient and costly. The system also lacked many billing features included in more advanced systems. Argus wanted to deploy a billing platform that would:

- **Reduce IT and hardware costs.** Argus’ server-based system was extremely expensive to run and maintain. The company’s IT staff spent significant amounts of time managing it, and server licenses were costly. Argus was looking to switch to a Web-based system that would allow it to significantly reduce IT and hardware costs.
- **Improve uptime.** The server-based system was not always reliable, and its speed and availability sometimes lagged, especially during times of heavy loads— when it was needed the most. For example, it typically took 12 hours to close a monthly billing period. Argus wanted a system that would improve uptime and performance.

- **Eliminate paper.** Argus was forced to rely upon massive amounts of paper records, which was difficult, inefficient, and time-consuming. File cabinets lined the hallways of Argus' offices, and the company had to rent extra space to store its paper-based records. Argus was looking to eliminate paperwork.
- **Improve workflow and productivity.** Argus' server-based system lacked important features. For example, it did not have the ability to perform instant eligibility checks so their staff would have to pore through paper records in order to determine eligibility. In addition, Argus had to maintain and check 14 separate databases when it closed out the month. Research required to solve a simple problem for a single account took many hours. Argus wanted a system with all information stored in a central location, with a simple-to-follow workflow, in order to increase efficiency and productivity.

Solutions

Argus investigated Web-based billing solutions, and ultimately chose Ingenix CareTracker. Argus chose CareTracker because of Ingenix's long history of creating medical systems, Ingenix CareTracker's sophisticated feature set, and the system's overall ease of use.

"CareTracker was clearly the best system out there," Bigam recalls. "It had all the features we were looking for, but was still very easy to use. Given Ingenix's long background in medical systems, we knew it would be the right choice."

Ingenix CareTracker is a Web-based application, and requires no hardware or software maintenance, no internal system backups, and no databases to maintain—Argus no longer had to maintain 14 separate databases. Argus was able to move off of its server-based system, and its IT staff no longer needed to spend the majority of its time maintaining it. The staff has since been able to perform more value-added tasks. In addition, Argus no longer needs to pay licensing fees for servers and software.

Because Ingenix CareTracker is Web-based, Argus no longer faces downtime. In addition, Argus has been able to eliminate its use of paper records, and no longer requires additional storage space.

With Ingenix CareTracker, Argus has been able to improve the services it provides to its physician clients. Because of increased efficiency, Argus can focus more attention to every claim in every individual account. For example, Argus can:

- Automate claim status checking within 7 days of submission
- Scrub outgoing claims prior to submission, maximizing their "pay at first pass" rate
- Easily identify claim issues quickly through automatic alerts pushed to the dashboard

Overall, automated eligibility verification significantly reduces the number of denials Argus needs to follow up on. Ingenix CareTracker has reduced A/R days for its clients by approximately 10%.

"Based on our research, we are seeing a 14.3% increase in staff efficiency which results in about \$160,000 savings per year in labor cost and \$40,000 savings per year in systems costs. The total annual savings are about \$200,000 per year and \$1,000,000 for 5 years.
 " —Shing Huang, Argus Chief Financial Officer

Results

Ingenix CareTracker has improved the productivity and efficiency of Argus' staff, dramatically reduced paperwork, eliminated downtime, improved workflow, and eliminated infrastructure costs for servers and software.

Staff efficiency and workflows have improved dramatically. Important documentation is no longer captured on paper or stored in multiple databases. Instead, all information is housed in one location, easily accessible with simple-to-use automated tools. Ingenix CareTracker includes integrated instant eligibility checks, which has proved to be a significant time-saver.

"Ingenix CareTracker has made us far more efficient, reduced our use of paper, and eliminated the costs that we pay for servers and software. With it, we have been able to improve our workflow, dramatically increase our productivity, and significantly reduce costs."



Vivian Bigam
Argus Business Office Director

Instead of taking 12 hours to close out each month's billing period, it can be done within minutes. When a problem needs to be researched or resolved, all information is available with a mouse click, instead of someone having to track down old information located in multiple filing cabinets.

"The productivity improvements have been tremendous," Bigam says. "We can do far more work now and are far more efficient. I used to have two people who did nothing but generate paper and electronic claims—now I only have one person doing that. Ingenix CareTracker also automatically tracks all of our claims, and makes reconciliation far easier. After implementing Ingenix CareTracker, we now save about \$160,000 per year in labor costs."

Argus has also been able to dramatically reduce its IT and infrastructure costs by \$40,000 per year, because it no longer needs to maintain servers and software.

Because Ingenix CareTracker allows Argus to provide better services for its clients, Bigam says that it has helped retain existing clients and attract new ones.

Bigam adds that physicians and executives also appreciate Ingenix CareTracker's capabilities. "Our physicians are much happier now that they see their financials on the dashboard instantly," she says. "Doctors do not need to be computer experts to figure out how to use the system. They can easily determine if the staff did not enter visits due to lost or misplaced charge tickets because the system automatically tracks missing encounters. Our CEO can use the system as well, and can get bottom-line financials with a click of the mouse."

About Argus Medical Management

Argus Medical Management (Argus) is one of the largest medical management services organizations in Southern California, servicing individual physicians, large medical groups, IPAs, MSOs, and hospitals. Since 1995 Argus has offered a wide range of MSO services from total turn key management solutions to a flexible “a la cart” menu of services to clients where they can select the services they need. Argus leverages its experience, expertise, technology, and economies of scale to bring value added services and help improve the financial performance of its health care clients. Currently Argus is the largest CareTracker Channel Partner and supports over 140 providers for billing and EMR. For more information about Argus, please visit www.argusmso.com.

About Ingenix

Ingenix delivers Intelligence for Health Care, uniting the brightest minds to improve health care through information and technology. Ingenix serves more than 250,000 diverse health care clients, including insurance companies, federal/state agencies, pharmaceutical and biotech firms, Fortune 500 enterprises, hospitals, and physicians within the health care community. For more information about Ingenix and its products and services, please visit www.ingenix.com.

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