vitalware®
by HealthCatalyst®

A Vitalware Case Study

Hendrick Medical Center

Hendrick Medical Center and Vitalware:
VitalCDM, VitalKnowledge, and
VitalIntegrity Prove Superior

A History Of Doing More...With Less

When Hendrick Medical Center opened its doors to the community in 1924, it was the first hospital to permanently serve the Texas Midwest. Hendrick's resources and community would soon be rigorously tested, with the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression that ensued. However, the Hendrick community quickly rallied behind their beloved hospital, and helped keep Hendrick's doors open when money was extremely tight.

From that early-stage struggle until now, Hendrick has prided itself on its ability to do more for less — keeping costs low, while keeping patients happy and healthy.

HENDRICK MEDICAL CENTER

Location:

Abilene, TX

Opened in:

1924

Staff:

568 Physicians

Over 3,000 Employees Overall

Hospital size:

540 beds

Solutions:

- VitalCDM™
- VitalKnowledge™
- VitalIntegrity™

Hendrick and VitalIntegrity

Today, thanks in large part to the continuous application of good business discipline and superb medical personnel and practices, Hendrick has become one of the country's leading healthcare facilities with over 540 beds and roughly 570 physicians on staff. They serve a wide variety of patient-care needs, including asthma, cancer, diabetes, and breast health, just to name a few.

To continue delivering on their mission, Hendrick Medical Center holds all elements of its operations, including revenue integrity, to the highest standards.

The Case for Change

Kathy Huston (Charge Capture Coordinator at Hendrick) had determined that their current revenue integrity provider just wasn't meeting their needs. Not only were their solution and personnel too costly for the benefits they provided, but change requests took far too much time. And the complexity of the solution itself made thorough review and direction difficult.

Huston knew her team needed to find a way to help assure that her hard-working billing team had the information and tools they needed to send out accurate claims. Hendrick's successful experience with VitalCDM and Vitalware's team gave them the impetus and confidence to finally make the switch to VitalIntegrity, a Vitalware® by Health Catalyst® application, for their charge integrity solution.

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Immediate, Significant Effects

The success of any revenue integrity solution can be measured directly, in dollar savings; and indirectly, in time and labor savings. For Hendrick, VitalIntegrity quickly earned high marks for both. Running in a side-by-side comparison with their legacy solution, VitalIntegrity immediately found more (real) charge capture opportunities.

In one case, a single error identified with VitalIntegrity led to recovery of $100,000 – and that doesn't even include future instances of the same error. Huston noted: "One coding error can be huge. Being able to monitor with Vitalware gives us a snapshot look at return on investment on a weekly basis. Our savings have far exceeded the cost of the product compared to the errors we're finding."

Ease of Use: For First Timers & Veterans Alike

One of the most common complaints Huston had fielded about their old solution was its inherent complexity. Across all departments, people had a hard time with navigation: the old solution "jumped around too much" whenever they had to seek out key information, and this invariably made it hard to get back to where they needed to be. "With all Vitalware products, everything was put together in a way that made more sense to everyone," she added.

The team also quickly realized they didn't have to rely heavily on instruction (or guesswork) from their partners. The difference was immediately noticeable. Huston found that a first-time user could go into Vitalware's tools with just a quick pointer or two about the layout, then maneuver through it on their own. "Vitalware is very user-intuitive and not difficult to figure out, even if you are new to the product," Huston said.

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Intuitive UI: Faster Path to Independence

Huston was impressed with how quickly veteran coders, nurses, clinicians, and newcomers alike were able to understand Vitalware's systems, and start to use them. She credits the ease of their transition to the way that Vitalware is designed and set up. Huston recalls teams being able to simply look at the software and immediately know what they were seeing and how to make use of it.

Organized Results Analysis (Cases)

One of the things Hendrick's team loves about VitalIntegrity is the ability to quickly organize results by using the solution's **Prioritization Space**. With VitalIntegrity, users can group multiple columns of data for enhanced visual display and organization, allowing faster prioritization of work. This feature is also available when reviewing account-detail charges — as users typically know what detail they're looking for, this capability helps them zero-in quickly when they're working an account, even when there's a very long lists of items.

Most of the time when working issues related to revenue capture you want to first get the low-hanging fruit. By prioritizing by *net revenue opportunity and issue type*, you are able to quickly review and resolve like-items simultaneously, capturing the highest dollar value first. This eliminates the usual wasted manpower of working first through the issues of lesser dollar-value that might be higher in number, but don't merit the labor dollars expended.

Customizing the Workspace

Not only has Vitalware been easier to use, the ability to customize Vitalware's products and tailor views to the needs of teams or individual users has been a huge asset across departments. The way coders view Vitalware's tools, compared to the way the finance or clinician teams view them, can vary significantly. Huston says users are able to not only change the summaries of what they want to see, but change the dashboard based on how they typically approach their work.

Customization, combined with Vitalware's common (and simple) terminology layout, creates another significant benefit: *connection.*

Breaking Down Departmental Silos

One of the biggest challenges hospital teams face is informational silos between departments, because they function so differently. At the same time, it's critical that these departments maintain an open and cooperative dialogue, especially between coders and clinicians. A common view of information is the best way to avoid costly mistakes.

"There's no longer an issue with communication between coders and clinicians, because the clarity of information VitalIntegrity provides actually educates clinicians on why having their charges correct is so important." Huston remarked, "VitalCDM, VitalKnowledge, and VitalIntegrity assures that definitions employed are meaningful to a nurse, and equally meaningful to a radiology technician."

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Transparency and Teamwork

Not only has Vitalware made it easy for Hendrick's clinicians to select accurate codes (thanks to easy-to-understand, jargon-free code descriptions), budget transparency has also been enhanced for clinicians. They can now see where their budget comes from for new equipment, staff, and more. Not surprisingly, seeing where clinical departments are losing out on budget due to coding errors quickly unifies personnel in the cause of accurate coding and charge capture.

In fact, after using Vitalware's solutions, many of Hendrick's clinicians, clerks, and technicians volunteered to attend annual coding update seminars. With both billing and clinical teams educated on the benefits of accurate coding and charge capture protocols, it's no surprise the accuracy of claims has improved at Hendrick.

Working with The Vitalware Team

Huston works directly with the Vitalware Client Success Team to stay informed on product updates, and to collaborate on any needed tweaks or changes to Vitalware solutions to make them even more beneficial to hospitals and physician's offices alike.

66 I talk with the Vitalware team weekly, and we put together different ideas of what would make the product better — and almost every two weeks, upgrades are implemented in the tools. Their response to us as a customer has just been outstanding.

Kathy Huston,
Charge Capture Coordinator

Hendrick Medical is a Leader, Now and In the Future

The strong partnership between Hendrick Medical Center and Vitalware has created a path to increased accuracy, compliance confidence, and better charge capture. With Hendrick serving thousands of families each year, and now employing over 3,000 workers across a full range of medical disciplines, their reputation is sure to continue shining. For the past 13 consecutive years, they've received the Gallup "Best Place to Work" award, and also received numerous awards for their practice specialties, including the Breast Imaging Center of Excellence, and special recognition from the American Diabetes Association.

One of the most recent awards that Hendrick is very proud of is having earned the highest star rating possible from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), putting Hendrick in the top 8% of hospitals across the nation. This achievement means that out of 4,586 hospitals measured across the nation, only 407 hospitals earned the top ranking.

Because CMS ratings are among the most cited in the industry, organizations earning this honor must deliver the highest level of compliance with evidence-based care, patient satisfaction, mortality, readmissions, infection rates, hospital acquired conditions and complications, and cost. These individual measures are ultimately rolled up into a hospital star rating system, with 1-star being the lowest, and 5-star being the highest

> "There's a commitment to excellence here at Hendrick in all areas of our operation and in our commitment to our patients, employees, and community and we're always looking for vendor partners that will share that commitment with us. With Vitalware, we've found a partner that really gets that, and gets what we're all about. We couldn't be happier."

Kathy Huston, Charge Capture Coordinator

New regulations, pricing transparency requirements, and thinning margins are causing hospitals to become ever more reliant on their revenue-cycle data being truly comprehensive and up to date. Vitalware is the only solution designed for today's technical and operational environments, and also designed for data-flexibility — so hospitals can always rely on their chargemaster, charges, and coding being current, accurate, and authoritative — whatever the future holds.

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