Improving Patient Collections & Patient Engagement at St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital

Located in Newburgh, New York, St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital (SLCH) is a 242-bed, not-for-profit acute care facility with a Level III Trauma Center. As the Hudson Valley's major healthcare resource, SLCH serves over 270,000 patients per year across its facilities with 1,500 employees and 300 physicians.

St. LUKE'S
CORNWALL
HOSPITAL

❖ Challenge

As outpatient volumes rose in its highly recognized and referred ambulatory clinics and rehabilitation services, SLCH struggled with underperforming, disjointed patient access operations. Personnel were located in multiple departments and used various non-integrated software systems that created disparate patient on-boarding paths. Financial clearance was limited, and identification of financial responsibility beyond co-pays was a manual process.

The negative outcomes were substantial:

❖ *Cash collections too low and slow*

❖ *Cost to collect too high*

❖ *Patient dissatisfaction with inconsistent experiences from lack of true pre-registration process*

❖ *Error-prone data collection*

❖ *Patient registration and lobby wait times too long*

> **"Point-of-service cash collections are higher than ever and more patients are being connected to government programs because every patient's journey is identified up front."**
> — TOM GIBNEY, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND CFO, SLCH

❖ Strategy

SLCH recognized it was time to take action. Eliminating its existing services vendors, the organization teamed with PatientMatters to revamp its processes and technology. The heart of the strategy involved establishing a centralized process and protocol through the PatientMatters IntelliPass system.

The IntelliPass System combines full on-boarding functions under one business owner supported by technology-enhanced workflows. With this system, a consistent process is maintained, outpatient services are scheduled, and financial clearance is obtained prior to the patient's arrival. This enables patient access personnel to provide full attention to each patient.

SLCH and PatientMatters established several critical goals to measure the effectiveness of the strategy:

❖ *Increase collections, especially at point-of-service*

❖ *Enhance patient satisfaction scores in the financial area to match its high clinical levels*

❖ *Normalize the pre-registration process for all outpatient departments*

❖ *Decrease registration wait times as well as no-shows and early-outs*

❖ *Collect and analyze data on patients who fail to meet appointments*

✦ Solution

Automation and proven best practices were the key to creating centralized, standardized processes. PatientMatters provided rigorous evaluation of current and projected needs and customized a complete technology suite for SLCH, including encompassing modules for eligibility review, address and identity verification, bill estimation, payment portal and propensity to pay. The company also helped SLCH implement a high-productivity call center system, as well as interfaces to the hospital's EHR.

The result was a highly efficient and consistent six-step pre-access registration process:

1. *Contact patients by phone at least five days prior to appointments*
2. *Verify insurance information, deductibles and co-pays*
3. *Run billing estimation*
4. *Assess ability to pay using PatientMatters' proprietary algorithm*
5. *Determine most appropriate payment options and generate customized financial care plan*
6. *Pre-register patient for all approved services*

✦ Results

Nearly two years into the new approach, the results have been impressive with key financial and operational goals met or exceeded.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGETED 50% INCREASE MONTH 24	ACTUAL KPI'S MONTH 20
POS Collections / Monthly $$ Average	$100,000	$115,988
Scheduling / Minutes Per Account	10	15
Daily Scheduling Goal / Per FTE	40	30
Pre-Reg and Collect / Minutes Per Call	6	8
Daily Pre-Reg and Collect / Per FTE	60	55
Authorization / Minutes Per Account	10	15
Daily Authorization	35	30

No More Waiting and Fewer No-shows

In less than two years with the patient-friendly check-in and registration process from PatientMatters:

✦ *62% of patients achieved "No Stop" status whereby they were pre-registered and then cleared to proceed directly to service on arrival throughout the duration of their treatment episode*

✦ *Lobby wait times reduced from 14 minutes to under six minutes across all of the participating clinics*

✦ *Appointment no-shows and cancellations decreased dramatically*