



Middle Star Health Care transforms the scope of CDI and coding

Wanting to improve coding efficiency and address its manual clinical documentation improvement (CDI) process, Middle Star Health Care began the search for an innovative technology.

“We had good people, but because we had to do everything manually, we had to pick and choose which cases we reviewed, and focused mainly on Complication or Comorbidity/Major Complication or Comorbidity (CC/MCC) capture,” says the inpatient coding and CDI manager. “We did not have any solid reporting to track query trends or areas of improvement.” Further limiting the value existing coding and CDI could provide was a lack of collaboration between departments.

Not just efficiency, but greater program scope

Middle Star chose the shared Optum® Enterprise Computer-Assisted Coding (CAC) and Optum® CDI 3D platform to improve its coding efficiency. The common technology platform for CDI and coding uses natural language processing (NLP) to identify documentation deficiencies and assign accurate codes. The automated workflows improved productivity for diagnostic coding by 57%, inpatient coding by 55%, and ED and clinical coding by 17%. “Outpatient productivity exceeds our targets, so we may be adjusting some of them upward now. That can be attributed to the Optum technology,” says the director of coding and clinical documentation.

Middle Star collaborated with Optum performance analysts to get the most out of Enterprise CAC and CDI 3D. “Our Optum partners identified several process improvements and worked with us to develop new, more efficient workflows that took advantage of the technology’s capabilities,” states the inpatient coding and CDI manager. “Optum is a good partner who brings a high level of collaboration and respect,” adds the director of coding and clinical documentation.

The combination of new workflows and the Optum NLP technology allowed Middle Star to expand CDI reviews to 100% of cases at 3 of its facilities. “Our CDI team was pretty skilled, but Optum really helped us prioritize the cases,” explains the inpatient coding and CDI manager. Because the Optum NLP reviews cases every time a new document is added, it has saved the team significant time. “Case Mix Index (CMI) increased 4% from reviewing all our encounters, and we could expand the scope of those reviews, too. We monitor not only CC/MCC capture rate but also query rates, physician response and agreement rates; and quality scores like patient safety indicators, severity of illness, risk of mortality and Hierarchical Condition Category (HCC) factor score. We never had the time or tools to do that before,” adds the inpatient coding and CDI manager.



Middle Star Health Care

- 850-bed, 4-hospital health system
- Serves a large Midwestern metropolitan area
- Operates more than 20 health clinics and a nursing/allied health college

↑ **4%**
all payer CMI

↑ **55+%**
inpatient and diagnostic coding productivity

↑ **46%**
CC/MCC capture rate

+ **99%**
physician query response rate

The greater reporting drawn from the shared platform also affects internal reporting. “Before, we could only report financial data, and physicians assumed we were just making money for the hospital. Now, we can report on how we review for quality and capture the complexity of the patient. Physicians really appreciate that level of detail.” This transparency has helped engage physicians. “Our physician response rate is consistently at 99%,” says the inpatient coding and CDI manager.

Stronger collaboration from a shared platform

Some of these results come from increased interdepartmental collaboration enabled by the shared Enterprise CAC and CDI 3D platform. “CDI can see individual codes, HCCs, CCs and MCCs. That visibility has allowed us to expand our program,” explains the inpatient coding and CDI manager. “And coders can also see the CDI team’s work.” The CDI team is encouraged to use the shared comments section to give coders context. This helps coders understand the CDI team’s thought processes when working cases, which not only cuts out unnecessary back-and-forth, but elevates coding effectiveness.

The improved collaboration from the Optum platform isn’t limited to just coding and CDI. “We were communicating manually with the quality team,” says the inpatient coding and CDI manager. “Their auditing process is much easier now. They can see why our team chose a particular code and see all the documentation and query work CDI did to support it.

Improved collaboration

Middle Star uses the shared Optum Enterprise CAC and CDI 3D platform to enable better communication across teams:



Coding can see CDI comments about MCC and diagnosis validation



CDI can send coders alerts about follow-ups and next steps



Quality team can easily access Patient Safety Index, HAC and second-level review notes during audits



CDI can flag cases for re-review before final coding

On-Site Physician Advisor

Middle Star also leverages an Optum® On-Site Physician Advisor and has achieved powerful results:

62%

peer-to-peer overturn rate

34%

increase in physician response rate to physician advisors

Discover how the Optum Enterprise CAC and CDI 3D platform can transform your coding and CDI operations. Visit us at:

optum.com/EnterpriseCAC

“Optum isn’t just a vendor – they really partner with us to identify opportunities to improve operations that we wouldn’t have identified otherwise. We’re far more successful because of their partnership.”

Director, Coding and Clinical Documentation



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