

DIXON FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC



Dr. Myles Dixon

THE PROBLEM

Clinic was treating 70-100 patients per day. For a variety of reasons, revenue failed to correlate with patient volume.

THE SOLUTION

The ACOM Consulting Group analyzed existing processes then designed and implemented new ones including education for the doctor and staff in understanding and properly applying CPT codes.

THE RESULTS

Practice revenue has doubled while patient volume has halved.

Dakota Doctor Reduces Patient Count, Increases Revenue

Fresh out of Northwestern College of Chiropractic, Dr. Myles Dixon joined his father's practice in Northwestern Iowa. Three years later, he decided to strike out on his own, establishing Dixon Family Chiropractic 100 miles to the west in Brandon, a suburb of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Within a short time, he was seeing 70-100 patients per day – acute care, wellness, every kind of walk-in (no appointment necessary) – balanced at about 75 percent insurance and 25 percent cash payment. Trouble was, practice revenue didn't reflect the high patient volume. Overtime and capacity issues were constant problems. Days were long and Dr. Dixon was getting tired, in every sense, of working so hard for so little revenue.

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Fast-forward: Dr. Dixon now sees about 35 patients per day; per-patient revenue has increased by 40 percent; each patient gets more time and attention; and office paperwork – typically a major practice burden – has been reduced by 95 percent.

Dixon Family Chiropractic operates with a practice support staff of two: one chiropractic assistant who delivers low tech rehabilitation services – therapeutic exercises, stretch and strength training, posture correction, balance, and so on; and one front office assistant who handles scheduling, billing and related office work. Where not long ago, his days often stretched into evenings, he now maintains a 3.5-4 day/week office schedule and is home for dinner.

Finding a solution

“I was physically burned out,” Dr. Dixon said. “A practice coach suggested that I get in touch with ACOM Healthcare Consulting Group. ACOM came to our offices – the first consultant ever to do so – and that visit began our turnaround.”

Several factors quickly became apparent:

- Inadequate understanding of the billing codes was impacting the strength of the treatment documentation, i.e. the story told to patients and third party payers that justified the charges.
- Similarly, insecurity about what to bill and how to bill often led to the doctor failing to code certain services that he felt might be contested.
- When legitimate charges were in fact challenged by third party payers, the doctor, like most chiropractors, simply accepted the lower payment or denial without challenging it.

The bottom line: Dr. Dixon was working too hard for too little money and often, he was not being paid properly for his work. ACOM showed him how he could dramatically increase his per-patient revenues, reduce his workload and establish a more smoothly functioning practice.

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BENEFITS

- Better coding
- Fewer challenges
- Higher collections per patient visit
- More income on fewer patients
- Streamlined office processes
- Defined staff responsibilities
- Organized workflow
- Controlled office hours - shorter days

The Practice Visit

The first day of the on-site visit involved a review and analysis of the procedures in place and the way responsibilities were deployed, and an intense education in proper coding procedures – all in the absence of patients. Procedures were adjusted and a number of new forms put in place. The second day was devoted to the application of the revised processes in a live-patient situation.

“We received an intense indoctrination in proper coding,” Dr. Dixon says. “We discovered that we were performing many procedures that we didn’t even know we could charge for – things like instruction in activities for daily living. ACOM also recommended that we add procedures that we were not doing that were not only remunerative but which were also supportive of our diagnoses and treatment plans. One of these was to acquire a range of motion testing device, which allows us to demonstrate outcomes objectively as well as subjectively.”

Enter Automation

A second major advancement in practice efficiency came with the purchase of the RAPID Complete chiropractic software solution, developed and marketed by the ACOM Healthcare Business

Division. RAPID Complete is a multi-module solution for electronic medical records (RAPID EMR) and electronic practice management (RAPID EPM).

Dr. Dixon had tried practice automation before but was disappointed in the result and abandoned the system. With ACOM and RAPID Complete, it is different:

“We have RAPID fully implemented with daily notes and reports, and we are often complimented by insurers, referring doctors, nurses and patients on the quality and consistency of our documentation,” he says. “The front office kiosk allows patients to self-register. They like doing so and it enables me to review details in their electronic files before I actually see them.”

Dr. Dixon’s relationship with the ACOM Consulting Group continues. They are in touch as needed by phone and the doctor submits a few patient records periodically to confirm that the practice remains compliant and procedurally on-track.

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