

Healthcare Innovation NEWS

Making A Case For Healthcare Innovation

Tufts Medical Center Streamlines Payments for Clinical Trial Participants

Program Objectives:

- Make administrative processes more efficient.
- Gain financial control and transparency.
- Support compliance and reporting needs.
- Support a better patient experience.

Program Description: Tufts Medical Center is an internationally respected, academic medical center located in the heart of Boston. Aside from providing patient care, the center conducts clinical trials and studies that make it necessary for site coordinators to assume administrative duties, such as scheduling visits, compiling data and handling patient reimbursements.

While these responsibilities could be expected at any site, the coordinators realized that there were areas where technology—specifically payment software—could improve operational efficiencies and even improve patient experience.

Efficient patient reimbursement is vital to clinical trials to eliminate any barriers to engagement and participation. Delays in payments can impact a patient's interest in returning. Tufts realized that manually processing payments and reimbursements with cash or check was wasting time and resources and was not ideal for trial participants.

For every patient visit, which could be as many as 25 each day, coordinators would have to walk 10 to 15 minutes to the petty cash office and provide documentation indicating the reason for a patient visit and why cash was needed. This process required the team to take additional steps in preparing for each patient visit.

When a patient was being reimbursed via a check, anything more than \$100 required coordinators to submit a request, triggering a host of additional administrative processes through the finance department and causing a major delay in patient payment.

Tufts found itself with a host of growing administrative processes to support patient reimbursements that were distracting from research, patient care and the ability to simply do its job. These manual processes also did not support the ability to track, monitor and audit payment transactions.

Tufts sought a means to simplify and automate payment process. In 2011, the center partnered with Greenphire, whose ClinCard solution proved to be just what it needed to streamline the patient payment process and take the administrative burden off staff.

ClinCard is the only patented payment technology designed to simplify clinical trial reimbursement and provide a patient-centric experience. The reloadable debit card reminds participants of upcoming appointments related to a trial and provides research sites a complete audit trail of all global payments, while maintaining blinded patient identities.

In addition, through the ClinCard Travel Module, trial participants could travel for a study without incurring out-of-pocket costs, further eliminating any hurdles that might prevent participation.

The ClinCard solution has enabled the research administration department at Tufts Medical Center to take a centralized view into all payments and transactions. "The research administrators that serve as approvers love the ability to run reports and simply export them to Excel. They can reconcile study budgets, see if all patients have been paid and if we're getting payments from sponsors. All of the information is in one place, a luxury we would not have without the ClinCard," says Emily Cameron, research administrator at Tufts Medical Center.

The IRS requires that 1099s be generated when patients are paid more than \$600 over the course of a year. The ClinCard solution provides Tufts with an easy way to run a report indicating which of its patients require a 1099 form. Previously, this manual process would take up a significant amount of an administrator's time.

Evaluation Process: Tufts proved to be an ideal hospital for an automated, patient reimbursement solution designed for clinical research and eliminating the administrative burdens of manually executing patient reimbursements. Within three years of implementing the ClinCard solution, 100% of Tufts' studies were using the ClinCard solution and had moved away from petty cash and checks as means of reimbursement.

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