



Healthcare Providers Exercise More Caution with IT Spending Due to Economic Downturn

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New Research Spotlights Need for IT Solutions with Measurable ROI

DAYTON, Ohio, Feb 18, 2009 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- According to a survey of U.S. healthcare organizations conducted by Healthcare Informatics Research, the recent economic downturn has care providers looking for ways to reduce IT spending and increase revenue. The study, commissioned by NCR Corporation (NYSE: NCR), indicates that one in three healthcare organizations are either postponing all non-essential projects or imposing longer IT project implementation timeframes in an effort to curb spending.

One of the single biggest challenges providers who participated in the study face is ensuring the overall accuracy of medical claims that are filed. Most care providers say their staffs spend hours finding missing and/or correcting inaccurate claims-related data after the patient visit, ultimately costing the organization time, money and further delays in reimbursements:

- Forty-six percent say they expect staff to devote between one and five hours per week total to cleaning up claims.
- More than 50 percent of those surveyed estimate that at least one in 10 claims is denied based on inaccurate or incomplete data.
- Verification of insurance, demographic information and outstanding balances were ranked most important to improving revenue cycle management.

The study reveals that identification and verification functions supporting the collection of complete and accurate patient data are considered essential in ascertaining the current status of the patient's insurance benefits, personal demographic information including current address and contact information, financial obligations, and outstanding balances--particularly when employed at the point of service.

According to NCR, healthcare providers utilizing self-service technology for patient check-in have seen co-payment collection increase by up to 40 percent and insurance claim denials decrease by up to 36 percent. Adopting self-service also can decrease the costs associated with paper-based forms by up to 90 percent, and free up staff to focus on patient needs, which can help drive increased patient satisfaction.

"With the current economic climate, we have to be very strategic with how we spend our IT dollars," said Tim Reiner, senior revenue officer for Adventist Health System. "By utilizing NCR's self-service technology, we've been able to consistently increase data accuracy, solicit outstanding patient balances and boost collections. In 2008, four percent of all payments, representing more than \$4.87 million in revenue, were received through self-service channels including the on-site check-in kiosks and online bill pay."

NCR's suite of self-service solutions are designed to enable hospitals, clinics, labs and other healthcare organizations to automate everyday patient interactions, including appointment scheduling, pre-registration, patient check-in and bill payment.

"The slowdown in the economy is impacting every organization in every industry," said Chakri Toleti, NCR vice president of Healthcare Industry Marketing. "Our goal is to facilitate consumer-driven healthcare that will make organizations more efficient and profitable so they can succeed in these tough economic times."

The survey of 435 information technology professionals was conducted between November 25 and December 4, 2008. For more information or to access a white paper detailing the findings, visit <http://www.healthcare-informatics.com/ME2/dirmod.asp?sid=&type=forms&mod=Smart+Forms&sfid=9AEA6D845F2A46CD91997B3FFEE99A9B&tier=1>.

About NCR Corporation

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