



OhioHealth Streamlines Workflow and Increases Procedure Scheduling by 136 Percent with QES

SITUATION OVERVIEW

CHALLENGE

- Centralize and automate patient scheduling
- Improve patient and physician satisfaction
- Increase market share

SOLUTION

- QuadraMed Enterprise Scheduling

RESULTS

- Major facilities fully automated
- Scheduling issues/errors less than 0.1% of procedures
- Press-Ganey satisfaction scores increased
- Primary market share increased to 48%

OhioHealth, located in Columbus, faced a challenge from decentralized, paper-based scheduling departments when planning to expand its network. Growing the network would dramatically hinder the system's operational and financial performance. To address this issue, in 1999, OhioHealth implemented QuadraMed Enterprise Scheduling (QES) as the foundation for a new centralized scheduling system. ▶



QES enables front office staff at each OhioHealth facility to **spend more time with patients**, improving the patient experience.

OBSOLETE PAPER-BASED SYSTEMS

OhioHealth's two existing facilities and four ambulatory health and surgical clinics had long operated paper-based scheduling departments.

Instead of accessing one central number, busy physician office employees dialed multiple numbers to schedule imaging, cardiology and other procedures, often placing calls to multiple facilities to book a procedure that matched their physicians' availability.

This time-consuming process inconvenienced and frustrated physicians, staff members and patients. It caused a negative ripple effect on throughput, revenue cycle management, efficiency, service quality, physician recruitment and retention programs.

OhioHealth streamlined scheduling workflows and improved physician productivity by implementing QES, and enabled physician offices to book multiple appointments with a single call.

GETTING STARTED

OhioHealth formed a vendor selection committee that included physicians, Neighborhood Care leadership, patient access services and imaging departments. After evaluating leading vendors, the committee selected QuadraMed's proven, enterprise scheduling solution.

Two full-time positions were created: director of central scheduling, and a system analyst. These individuals would:

- Identify and address scheduling workflow issues
- Obtain buy-in and train staff
- Customize the system to meet defined needs
- Manage the centralized scheduling department

SATISFYING PHYSICIANS AND PATIENTS

QES enables front office staff at each OhioHealth facility to spend more time with patients, improving the patient experience. In fiscal year 2008, centralized scheduling recorded 426,984 calls from physicians and patients, while producing impressive customer service metrics:

- On average, calls are answered in five seconds, compared to a target of 7.5 seconds
- Only one percent of calls are abandoned compared to the goal of 1.5 percent
- Scheduling issues/errors represent less than 0.1 percent of 479,888 procedures

Every participating OhioHealth facility reported higher patient satisfaction. One particularly impressive increase was the Press-Ganey score at Doctors Hospital, which increased from the 48th percentile in the third quarter of 2008 to the 96th percentile in the fourth quarter of 2008 after the system's full implementation.

To further maximize efficiency and benefits, OhioHealth began integrating scheduling with other systems. The organization implemented a new process to check Medicare medical-necessity requirements before patients present, which resulted in a medical-necessity compliance rate of 96 percent. Previously, compliance was verified on-site at time of the patient's arrival, resulting in delays to complete procedures.

OHIOHEALTH* AT A GLANCE

Not-for-profit, charitable, healthcare organization serving a 40-county area

Staffed beds: **1,802**

Total physicians: **2,500**

Total employees: **15,000**

Annual inpatients: **106,280**

Annual outpatients: **1,713,432**

Annual ED patients: **337,368**

* Includes Riverside Methodist, Grant, Doctors, Dublin Methodist, Grady, Marion, Hardin, and Doctors Nelsonville, 2008

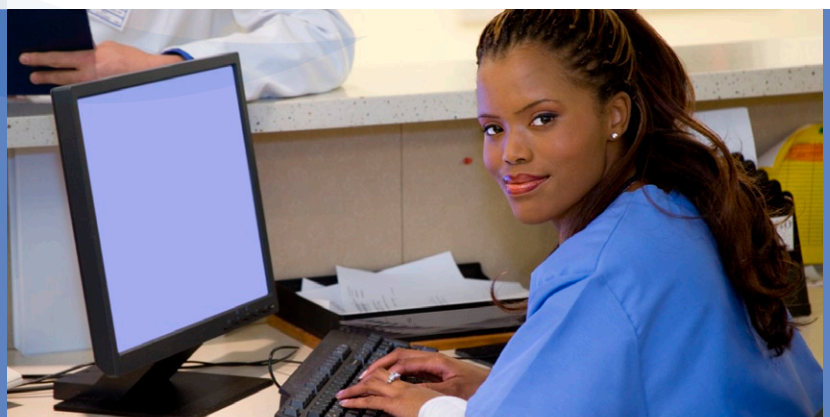
INCREASED FLEXIBILITY

QES enables physicians to attach scripts for imaging and cardiology procedures. Previously, OhioHealth relied on patients to hand-carry scripts. If they forgot, or the scripts went missing, appointments were rescheduled to avoid the risk of proceeding without documentation. The QES electronic attachment feature ensures patients are served on a timely basis, increasing satisfaction and reducing losses from rescheduled appointments.

Another advantage is the system's ability to accommodate most requests for same-day appointments. To capitalize on this feature, in December 2008, schedulers began routinely asking physicians and patients if they wanted same-day appointments. The same-day volume jumped from 1,200 in September 2008 to 2,400 in June 2009, which resulted in a considerable spike in increased revenue.

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With QES, less than 0.1% of OhioHealth's current 479,888 annual procedures are scheduled in error.



case study

OHIOHEALTH [continued]



The number of OhioHealth referring physicians has **increased more than 40%** from system implementation through fiscal 2009.

CENTRALIZED SCHEDULING OPTIONS

Scheduling is performed primarily by phone, with OhioHealth averaging 1,800 incoming and outgoing calls daily. But as expenses outpaced reimbursements, physician practices asked OhioHealth to provide options.

In response, the organization began offering fax and online scheduling, and allowed practices to cancel and edit appointments online. With multitasking and arranging appointments at their convenience, staff productivity rose dramatically. OhioHealth employees also became more productive as reduced phone traffic enabled them to perform higher priority tasks.

To build on its productivity gains, OhioHealth has implemented an aggressive, highly successful outreach program promoting online scheduling. During the first 10 months of fiscal 2009, users scheduled 7,200 appointments online, nearly twice the 3,677 online appointments scheduled in 2008. To date, 23 practices — representing 125 doctors — schedule appointments online, compared to 14 offices and 67 physicians in August 2008. The current goal is to add 10 practices quarterly.

TANGIBLE RESULTS

A recent survey showed that physician practices ranked satisfaction with QES as 4.6 on a five point scale. This has helped OhioHealth grow its central Ohio market share from 44 percent in fiscal 1999 to 48 percent in 2008, with the number of referring physicians increasing from 1,400 to more than 2,000 during the same period.

Another of the benefits derived from improved efficiency is OhioHealth's 136-percent rise in scheduled procedures, which increased from 203,000 to more than 479,000 procedures booked annually.

As of 2009, five of OhioHealth's eight facilities are linked to QES, and a sixth will be connected by January 1, 2010. The remaining two facilities will also benefit from using centralized scheduling in the future.

A major pillar in OhioHealth's business and strategic plans, centralized scheduling, coupled with QES, streamlines administrative workflow throughout the continuum of care. Additionally, QES has helped OhioHealth improve patient and provider satisfaction, as well as overall productivity — resulting in increased loyalty, market share and revenue. 