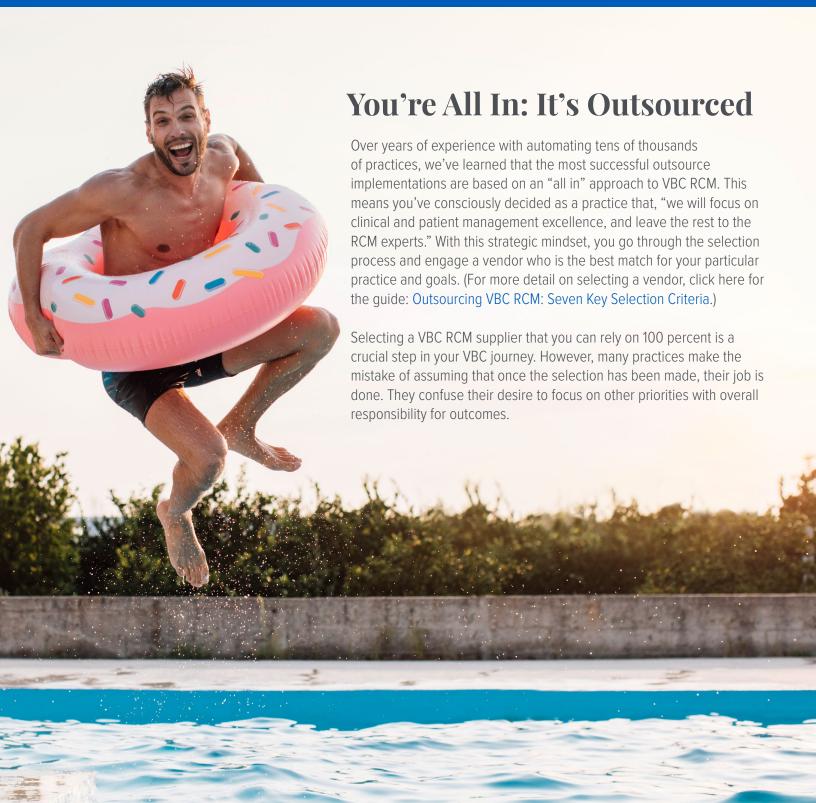# Lessons Learned:
What NOT to do
When Working with a
VBC RCM
Outsource Supplier

Selecting the right VBC RCM outsource supplier for your practice can be challenging but rewarding once a high-quality partner is in place. At that point, successful practices shift focus from the details of VBC RCM to managing the direction and effectiveness of the implementation. Along that path, they avoid these six assumptions that frequently derail success and growth.

You're All In: It's Outsourced

Over years of experience with automating tens of thousands of practices, we've learned that the most successful outsource implementations are based on an "all in" approach to VBC RCM. This means you've consciously decided as a practice that, "we will focus on clinical and patient management excellence, and leave the rest to the RCM experts." With this strategic mindset, you go through the selection process and engage a vendor who is the best match for your particular practice and goals. (For more detail on selecting a vendor, click here for the guide: Outsourcing VBC RCM: Seven Key Selection Criteria.)

Selecting a VBC RCM supplier that you can rely on 100 percent is a crucial step in your VBC journey. However, many practices make the mistake of assuming that once the selection has been made, their job is done. They confuse their desire to focus on other priorities with overall responsibility for outcomes.

Drive the Vehicle, Don't Fix the Engine

The most successful practices understand that "leave the rest to the RCM experts," means relying on the vendor to provide the technical systems, regulatory updates, claims, billing, and other details that can otherwise bog a practice down. They view it more like purchasing a new vehicle. The vendor is expected to install and maintain the engine, make sure the safety systems and warning lights and gauges are operating, and that there's plenty of fuel in the tank.

But you must still do the driving. You must map out the destination and steer toward it through the twists and turns, and ups and downs that may come along. If the engine breaks, the vendor will fix it. But you must be watching the warning lights and gauges and ensure adjustments and maintenance are completed. Otherwise, you may end up in a ditch, blaming the vehicle for not taking you to the end point, and frustrated at how a top-notch vendor could let this happen.

Getting this single concept straight between your leadership team and the vendor makes all the difference in collectively creating significant improvement in not only your VBC approach and delivery, but in the growth, efficiency and profitability of your practice overall.

> "Map out the destination & steer through the twists & turns, ups & downs that may come along.

Never Assume

With that in mind, we've assembled this list of six assumptions that most frequently pull practices away from effectively driving toward their desired VBC RCM goals. Keep these in mind whether you're in the evaluation/selection process, or if you've made the "all in" jump and want to ensure a positive experience with outsourced VBC RCM.

1 Don't assume the patient experience is on auto-pilot

A key component of value-based care is the perceived quality of the patient experience with your practice. Outsourced solutions will include a web-based patient portal designed to enhance the patient-practice interaction. Portals these days are robust, interactive and tuned to providing patients with many options for managing their healthcare and communicating with the practice.

However, many practices miss the opportunity for improving the patient experience by assuming the portal is their patient experience auto-pilot. Proactively seeking and analyzing patient feedback can tell you not only about the portal experience itself, but also about the efficiency of other parts of the care continuum and their impact on patients. Here are a few examples:

Portal Feedback
Responses collected through the portal comments section, or a simple pop-up survey on the site, can provide input to help identify trouble spots and guide you and your vendor to changes that will improve the patient experience.

Patient Call Tracking
Simple categorization of patient phone call topics offers many useful insights into how the system is performing, since patients will often call when the technology becomes overly frustrating. Topics may include:

- ⊙ Trouble accessing the portal, finding information, etc.

- ⊙ Answers to billing questions that should be available on the portal. This may point to issues with different parts of the RCM system, such as EOB denials, inaccurate or delayed posting to patient accounts, and patient portion payment inaccuracies.

2 Don't assume reporting is optimized

One of the most exciting improvements of leading VBC RCM systems is the depth of reporting available across various aspects of the practice. Many powerful reports are standard and easily customizable to provide excellent visibility into key processes and performance outcomes.

However, to take full advantage of this capability, keep in mind that reporting must be customized to your specific practice, specialty, and unique goals and challenges. For example, your situation may require unique aspects of VBC reporting, such as clinical CQM reports or specialized regulatory certifications. This will require additional report customization beyond the "out-of-the-box" standard system reports.

Also, your patient population will have unique and valuable data that can be mined, reported on and utilized to deliver higher quality service or fuel growth. This includes large amounts of data now being generated through patient interactions with telemedicine, electronic education, and online portal, bill-pay, scheduling, intake forms, messaging and prescription renewals.

3 Don't assume your business health is optimized

A great system with great reporting will provide you with great processes and great data, and even great insights about your practice. But as the driver, you will ultimately still need to sort through and decide what the implications are, and what actions should be undertaken as a result. Don't assume the system will automatically implement optimal improvements.

Practices that consistently stay focused on key metrics produce better results more quickly. Examples of key metric tracking includes things such as:

- Are KPIs set up and tracked in the system? Are they reported and acted on consistently?

- Are specific efficiency measures summarized, reviewed and acted on consistently? This includes measures such as RVU and CPT frequency reports to optimize physician efficiency.

- Is the practice consistently hitting its growth, quality and financial goals?

4 Don't assume revenue growth is system-generated

The best systems are also capable of providing customized insights into additional opportunities for focused revenue generating or optimizing that may not otherwise be readily apparent. Again, the best systems will provide the data, but focused effort is required by the practice to realize these gains as well.

Examples of these opportunities might include:

- Analysis of payor performance to identify shifts in payor mix or approach that will lead to better reimbursement

- Analysis of referring physicians by revenue, and implications

- Geo-targeting patients by revenue or other key indicators

- Targeted outreach to patients spending time on the portal reviewing specific educational materials

5 Don't assume technology is static

Technology is constantly moving, and practices and vendors must stay closely in synch to keep ahead of the latest developments. This includes regulatory and security updates as well as new technology improvements.

Clinics can avoid misunderstandings and surprises by having vendors regularly report on ongoing technology upgrades, fixes and customizations. A closed loop system – where requests are logged, addressed, reported and closed – will help keep communication flowing.

A one to two year technology and regulatory roadmap is also very useful. Vendors should be able to outline approximate timing of technology updates and planned implementations of regulatory changes.

6 Don't assume tech support will always come to you

Top vendors place a great deal of emphasis on excellent support and service. However, every practice client is unique, and even the best vendors can't anticipate all circumstances.

Clinics with the smoothest operating VBC RCM systems establish a close relationship with their vendor's tech support team, and proactively reach out when issues or questions first arise. By keeping the working relationship and communication strong, even during times of relative calm, these practices ensure that that the right resources will be in place when challenges develop.

"Avoid misunderstandings & surprises by having vendors regularly report on ongoing technology upgrades, fixes & customizations.

CONCLUSION

Working closely with your outsourced VBC RCM supplier to clearly establish roles & direction, maintain consistent communication, & jointly explore opportunities for customization & growth will help ensure a successful implementation & long-term working partnership.

AdvancedMD

(800) 825-0224
advancedmd.com