

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT | BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Meridian Weight Management Center

Meridian, Mississippi

CLINIC PROFILE

Providers: 15 Provider practice**Specialties Served:** Behavioral Health, Weight Management**AdvancedMD Client Since:** 2013

Technology Profile: After a rocky start, Meridian discovered that denials are preventable and recoverable, after incorporating AdvancedRCM services and software into its office healthcare information technology infrastructure. After speaking with multiple RCM service providers, and even trying one that didn't produce the promised results for claims payment and denials follow-up, they added AdvancedRCM to the practice's existing scheduling, clinical and patient experience solutions. This enabled them to outsource its RCM to dedicated billing experts who identified areas of underperforming revenue collections. They soon added AdvancedPM that worked with their existing EMR, but found AdvancedEHR was much better than their current EHR.

Practice Highlights: Founded by Dr. Andrea Goodwin and David Bonner, RN, CPT, Meridian Weight Management Center is dedicated to helping clients who desire a sustained weight loss, leading to a healthier life. The practice has grown very rapidly – with 10,000 patient visits per year – and partnered with Intouch Psychological Services to offer behavioral health services at its locations in Meridian and Philadelphia, MS. New primary care clinics are part of Meridian's expansion plan.

MERIDIAN WEIGHT MANAGEMENT CENTER FINDS INTEGRATED RCM, EHR AND PM IS KEY TO A HEALTHY PRACTICE.

The American Medical Association has revealed some staggering statistics when it comes to medical practice billing: 29 percent of claims are returned with zero payment, and 50 percent of denied claims are never reworked. However, the AMA also asserts that 90 percent of denials are preventable, and 67 percent of denials are recoverable. A Mississippi-based independent weight management-behavioral health practice has discovered that denials are indeed preventable and recoverable, by incorporating highly effective revenue cycle management (RCM) services and software into its office healthcare information technology infrastructure.

MERIDIAN PERSEVERED DESPITE A ROCKY TECHNOLOGY START

Founded in 2013, by Dr. Andrea Goodwin and David Bonner, RN, CPT, Meridian Weight Management Center is dedicated to helping clients who desire a sustained weight loss, leading to a healthier life. The practice has grown very rapidly – with 10,000 patient visits per year – and partnered with Intouch Psychological Services to offer behavioral health services at its locations in Meridian and Philadelphia, MS. New primary care clinics are part of Meridian's expansion plan, which Mr. Bonner feels would not be possible without the AdvancedMD cloud suite of practice automation software.

"When we started out, we researched and found an electronic medical records solution with billing management software that we thought was right for us. But it was a disaster, and almost cost us our business," recalls Mr. Bonner. He soon learned about AdvancedMD practice management software and found he could use it with the practice's existing EMR software...until he realized that AdvancedMD had an EHR that, according to Mr. Bonner, was "10 times better" than what the practice had originally selected.

"We didn't have a coder, or a billing department, so marrying the practice management and EHR systems was like a godsend to us," Mr. Bonner adds. "It helped us streamline what we were doing, and saved our business actually."

When Meridian split its weight management and behavioral health practices into two separate businesses, the AdvancedMD software was "moldable" and easily accommodated the new business model - as well as a new office in Philadelphia - with no problems. Mr. Bonner has the same expectations for its primary care clinic opening in June 2018. Meridian now has 15 providers and a half-dozen administrative personnel, all of whom have embraced the AdvancedMD suite of solutions.



In-House RCM Proved Problematic Until the Adoption of AdvancedRCM

Mr. Bonner says he initially chose to handle the revenue cycle management process in-house. However, he soon realized that the practice was barely making payroll. “The work was there but the money was not...and we had no idea why.”

Mr. Bonner talked to numerous RCM service providers, and even tried one that didn't produce the promised results for claims payment and denials follow-up. Ultimately, he decided to add the AdvancedMD RCM services (AdvancedRCM) to the practice's existing scheduling, clinical and patient experience solutions, enabling Meridian to outsource its revenue cycle management to dedicated billing experts who identified areas of underperforming revenue collections that required the practice's attention and action.

“Just the setup of AdvancedRCM alone, with a trainer who goes through all the details, found a lot of issues that we didn't know existed and therefore why we weren't getting paid,” explains Mr. Bonner. “We don't have a huge budget for lots of administrative people to sit in an office to follow up on these things, so we had to maximize our use of technology...and that's what AdvancedMD has done for us.”

Mr. Bonner has nothing but praise for the performance of AdvancedRCM. “I especially like that it keeps things together and communicates well with the other systems. It also needed to be easy for my providers to use. I didn't want them to have to go to four different places to set up a charge slip or enter charges. Being able to build a charge slip that limits their choices to the general things we do, and one click gives them the code, and the things they can choose from for the diagnosis, and boom, that decreases our chances for error tremendously.”

Reasonable cost was also critical in Meridian's choice of AdvancedRCM. In most cases, software is free and “AdvancedRCM only charges a percentage of what's collected, and then a small fee for adding new providers. So as we're growing, I know we won't be spending an exorbitant amount of money to add practitioners and offices,” Mr. Bonner notes.

AdvancedRCM Cuts A/R Days for Meridian

The AdvancedRCM go-live process included lots of personalized clean-up and assistance from AdvancedMD with existing accounts receivable. “My over-120-accounts-receivables balances were through the roof,” recalls Mr. Bonner. “AdvancedMD helped me work through them by chasing those outstanding receivables, then continued to help by telling me who should get paid and who shouldn't, and how to write off what we absolutely can't collect – that was a big, big help for us.”

Mr. Bonner says the full AdvancedMD system and services are very robust, and the excellent training from AdvancedMD enables Meridian to get the full benefit of the system. “Having that implementation person getting all our people trained, showing us how to use every aspect of the system, and having the EDI team checking those agreements, making sure the codes are right in the system and we're billing to the right addresses, it was just phenomenal!”

He adds that he's used systems in hospitals that are not nearly as user-friendly as AdvancedMD. “We have such a varied practice, from bariatric medicine to behavioral health to personal training, and it handles them all. We have patients from pediatric to Medicare and everything in between. It all

boils down to charges going out and money coming in.”

Meridian's accounts receivable days are down significantly since adopting AdvancedRCM. Mr. Bonner says most of their A/R is current, within 30 days. “And, with AdvancedMD working our receivables, there's at least 20 percent less going into the over-120-days category.”

AdvancedRCM provides users with a dedicated liaison to address billing problems and issues. “There are so many moving parts, and we often need help figuring out, who to talk to or what we need to do. Having a single person we can contact is a great program,” according to Mr. Bonner. “As a small business owner, it's scary to give up so much control, but it's reassuring when you find that you're working with people who are driven to help you achieve your goals.”

Mr. Bonner sums up his experience with AdvancedMD: “I can't get over how well all the systems work together, and what they've done to help our practice without costing us an arm and a leg. I know we would not have expanded as we have without the AdvancedRCM services to help us get here. It would have needed to hire ten people to do what we did with AdvancedMD – and we couldn't afford that.”

SUCCESSFUL REVENUE MANAGEMENT REQUIRES PERSISTENCE, CONSISTENCE AND STAMINA

AdvancedMD is committed to helping independent medical practices accelerate their financial growth with comprehensive outsourced medical billing services. The AdvancedRCM services offer accurate, real-time financial visibility, technology and tools that increase collections, and a collaborative team to meet current and evolving needs. Increasing practice revenue is just one way that AdvancedMD empowers healthy practices and healthy patients.

