![AdvancedMD]

PEDIATRICS

Sunwest Pediatrics
Weston, FL

"AdvancedMD is a great system, but the coolest feature is the fact that it increased my revenue by 30 percent," said Harvey. "Our saving grace was doing our own billing with the AdvancedMD system. It has allowed the practice to become what it should become."

Dr. Rivera-Ocasio

ABSTRACT

Sunwest Pediatrics had a stable patient population and steady annual growth, yet revenues and profitability fluctuated dramatically from month to month, severely impacting the clinic's ability to continue to prosper and grow. After deciding to move billing in-house, the clinic selected the AdvancedMD cloud system as its billing platform. Within a short period of time, revenues not only stabilized, but increased by over 30 percent and the practice quickly moved to consistent profitability.

THE PROBLEM

When Dave Harvey came out of retirement from the oil industry to manage the practice of Dr. Maribel Rivera-Ocasio as a favor to a friend, he knew he would need outside help to compensate for
his lack of direct medical practice billing and collections experience. He hired an outside billing service, and turned all claims and billing activities over to this outsource vendor.

For several years the practice struggled financially, and Harvey soon began to notice several disturbing trends. First, net revenues displayed major fluctuations from month to month with no apparent pattern. "We had a stable patient load and steady growth, yet revenues were gyrating wildly and we were struggling to break even," said Harvey. "The billing company's explanations – different numbers of Medicaid patients, physicals, procedures done, from month to month – it didn't add up. I knew there was something wrong with billing."

Harvey was also told that lag time of 30-90 days from filing the claim to seeing reimbursement was considered normal. When asked for detailed reporting on claims status, the biller provided a report of all claims filed, but was unable to determine which had been paid and which were still pending. "We assumed the billing company would follow up on claims and make sure they were all paid or resolved," said Harvey. "We discovered that their systems were incapable of tracking claims through the process, and their employees didn't pay attention to detail in making sure issues were resolved."
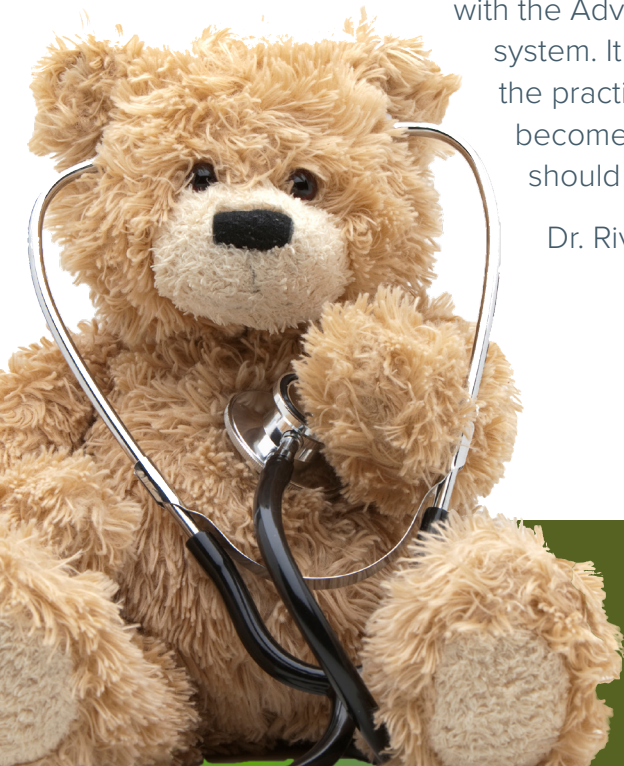
Harvey came to the conclusion that he either had to bring billing in-house or go broke – and the latter wasn't an option. He decided to survey the market and find a billing system that would meet the two most serious challenges in managing his own billing process: his inexperience with computer systems in general, and his relative inexperience with the details of medical billing.

"This decision is scary for a doctor, and really scary for the administrator," said Harvey. "But, I jumped in and discovered that it wasn't difficult at all." In the course of his investigation, Harvey spoke to a doctor in the vicinity who had just spent $18,000 to upgrade and network all the computers in his office, besides paying for acquisition and updates to the billing software system. "That's when I knew we had to go web-based," said Harvey.

"With web-based, everything is interconnected and updated by default." Harvey evaluated six different web-based solutions, but found that AdvancedMD had the strongest reputation for performance and delivery of results that met his criteria. The clinic runs on the AdvancedMD web-based billing and practice management system, accessible securely from any Internet-connected computer in the office, or anywhere.

THE OUTCOME

The AdvancedMD cloud billing solution has lived up to every expectation Sunwest Pediatrics had going into the transition to in-house billing.

Cloud Based Cost Savings, Instant Updates

In retrospect, Harvey's early move to a cloud based system has been a great advantage for the clinic. Computer networking, hardware, software and maintenance costs are a fraction of what they would have been with an on-site system. Additionally, the automatic updates to the system ensure that bills are submitted with the latest, most accurate information available.

"The doctor next door not only had to buy and install an on-site system and network, he has to buy and install updates when Medicare or anything else changes," said Harvey. "With AdvancedMD, it's automatically done. I don 't have to worry about it and don't have to pay extra for it."

Cloud Reliability and Accessibility

"Some people worry about the central servers being so far away," said Harvey. "The system is so reliable, we are virtually never down. They could be in Timbuktu as far as I'm concerned AdvancedMD is rock solid." Flexible access has been another advantage of the system, which allows users to log on from any Internet-enabled computer and work as if they were at the desk in the office. "I can keep up on the work from anywhere," said Harvey. "I was on vacation in Costa Rica recently and didn't miss a beat."

Simple, Virtually Error-Free Billing

The AdvancedMD Claims Inspector technology helps ensure that claims are "clean" and error-free prior to submission. "If we get going fast and enter the wrong code or the age of the patient doesn't match up, the claims scrubber will tell me," said Harvey. "AdvancedMD has made it so simple – it tells me when I've made an error before I submit."

The system's comprehensive, advanced capabilities have dramatically improved the reimbursement turnaround time of the clinic's revenue cycle. Now Harvey can submit claims for an entire day's schedule (25-50 visits) in less than an hour. And faster time to receipt of payment has improved cash flow and profitability. "The previous billing company told us it was normal to take 1-3 months to get paid – it was atrocious," said Harvey. "With AdvancedMD, by the end of the month I have already collected three quarters of what I have billed."

Customized, Effective Training

The personalized, simplified training offered by AdvancedMD during the ramp-up stage of the transition was tremendously important to the success of the project. "I was skeptical that I could be trained over the phone, as AdvancedMD proposed," said Harvey. "But it was a breeze. They ran my computer remotely to show me the features, and by the third week, I fired the billing company – even before I was trained on posting, because I knew it would work."