

Mailstream On Demand significantly increases client payment rate for Centerstone.

Client profile

Centerstone

centerstone.org

- One of the nation's largest not-for-profit providers of community-based behavioral healthcare
- Provided services in 2014 to 84,000 individuals and families in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee
- Mission is to prevent and cure mental illness and substance addiction



CENTERSTONE

Streamlining billing to focus on patient care

As one of the nation's leading not-for-profit providers of community-based behavioral healthcare, Centerstone provides a full range of mental health services, substance abuse treatment and intellectual and developmental disabilities. The organization expects growth of up to 35 to 40 percent over the next three years and is taking steps to streamline internal processes that are non-essential to patient care, but absolutely essential to the financial viability of Centerstone. The monthly process of mailing out statements via a courier service had become a major strain on staff time and costs.

Business challenge

"The problem," relates Helen Nowak, Contract Coordinator for Centerstone, "was that in an effort to send out our statements, we would have several staff members stuffing envelopes and running them through the postage meter. Plus, we were paying the full cost of postage because we did not meet the USPS criteria for minimum quantity zip code requirements." Although Centerstone looked at local mailing services as an option, staff obligations were still intensive and an additional postage charge for mail pick-up was tacked on. Additionally, medical confidentiality was of paramount importance, including the legally proper way to itemize drugs.

"Pitney Bowes is able to give us the opportunity to be professional. What we were doing in-house never looked as good."

—Helen Nowak, Contract Coordinator

Technology used

- Mailstream On Demand service

"I was losing productivity when the office came to a standstill to get the statements to the patients. I'm thrilled because my staff now has more time to do their own jobs instead of being mailmen."

— Geri Miedreich, Revenue Cycle and Patient Accounts Director



For more information,
visit us online:
pitneybowes.com



Solution

After an unsuccessful try to outsource the process, Centerstone turned to Pitney Bowes to try to enhance its courier process. Centerstone got much more than they bargained for when Pitney Bowes introduced the Mailstream On Demand solution to the organization. Using a combined digital and physical strategy, the solution moves transactional communications quickly and securely. After devising a formatting protocol that met its requirements, Centerstone submits its customer data file to Mailstream's online service, which creates the customer statements and delivers them by mail. After giving the solution a 90-day probationary period, Centerstone was hooked.

"They were super creative statements," said Geri Miedreich, Revenue Cycle and Patient Accounts Director. The solution includes return envelopes, which Centerstone had been unable to provide previously. In another new option, the statement includes multiple ways for the customer to submit payment, including via phone, email or credit card. The statement can be detached from the general information and returned in the return envelope. "And it's colorized," says Miedreich. "Before it was black and white

Benefits

All the enhancements provided a totally unexpected and much welcome benefit: more customers are paying their bills, a fact Nowak and Miedreich attribute to having so many more options, including how to contact Centerstone with questions.

"We probably have doubled, or at least increased by a third, the amount of money coming in from the statements through Pitney Bowes than when we did it in-house," says Miedreich. And cash flow, they agree, is pretty much essential for a not-for-profit. "I was looking into saving money, saving the staff, and it turns out that even the clients are paying better because of the statements they're receiving," says Nowak.

The solution also eliminates the need for several staff members to leave their normal jobs, significantly improving productivity. The organization also cites hard-cost-reduction on paper, envelopes, and postage. (And it spared the burnout of Centerstone's copier.)

"Everybody is very pleased with Pitney Bowes," says Nowak. "And if I had to do this all over again tomorrow, in a blink of an eye, I wouldn't have to think about it. I would just say 'absolutely.'"