



SCS Case Study

Web-based Interface Brings Client Increase in Productivity, Usability and Savings of Millions of Dollars

The Client

The Client is an independent, nonprofit health plan providing health coverage and services to more than 225,000 members in Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Working in partnership with healthcare providers and community organizations, the Client serves:

- Medicare-eligible individuals
- Families and individuals enrolled in Minnesota healthcare programs such as MinnesotaCare and Medical Assistance
- Adults with disabilities

The Client's membership includes a large majority of the public assistance healthcare recipients in Minnesota and western Wisconsin. The Client also offers Medicare coverage to members as a Medicare Advantage provider. This arrangement results in much better and timelier processing of claims for its Medicare members versus directly working with Medicare.

The Challenge

Near the end of 2010, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) began enforcing a new rule: If CMS had a record of a Medicare Advantage plan member having other insurance at any time in the past and the other insurance in the CMS database is not terminated, CMS would consider the Client a secondary payer. Reimbursement for a secondary payer is much smaller than that for a primary payer, so this meant potential losses in the millions of dollars for the Client.

Despite an aggressive July 2011 deadline, the Client was unable to start analyzing this new CMS requirement until February 2011. "There were no real in-house experts to go to," explained the Client's Claims Adjustments and Recovery Supervisor. In need of a new system quickly, the Client teamed up with SCS. "We needed to make sure we met the government guidelines, while still making a tool that was user-friendly," he said, adding: "We were developing a tool for a set of guidelines that seemed to be very grey and changed daily."

The Solution

An SCS developer worked closely with the Client's business analyst on a prototype database, website, and design document. Together they produced a robust description of the system that could create reliable work estimates.

First, a Microsoft SQL Server database was developed to hold Medicare Secondary Payer (MSP) input data, MSP occurrences that had to be investigated, and data exchanged with the CMS. After the database was designed, functionality was added to start solving the problem. SQL Server integration service packages were added to handle MSP input files, CMS request files, and CMS response files.

CMS was slow on processing the request files, so response files could come in over a long period of time. This meant that the database had to be carefully monitored and organized. There were problems with CMS forming responses correctly as well, and the SCS developer worked with CMS to resolve the problems.

Finally, a Microsoft ASP.NET website was developed, allowing users to update investigations and initiate requests to CMS for updated information on other insurance for members. It also allowed managers to track productivity and the status of investigations. The site connected to the SQL Server and Oracle databases and used AJAX and JQuery for parts of the user interface. Web-based financial reports were also developed.

The Result

The project was completed on time and allowed the Client to avoid reductions in payment that could have measured in the millions of dollars. It also allowed a large amount of work to be done using just two people — a manager and full-time benefits coordinator.

The web-based user interface allowed the manager to watch the status of the investigations and manage resources. It was well received and had few problems. The Client shared with SCS that, "The solution was intuitive and created to adapt to future changes and needs."

The Client was very happy with the entire development process and the results of the system. At a final review meeting for the project, the Client acknowledged that the main reason for the success of the project and the great usability of the system was the excellent work by the SCS developer, describing him as, "a great team player. A definite key to this project's success."

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