Make Money for Your Organization by Bringing the Release of Information Process (ROI) In-House

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There have been Release of Information (ROI) requests as long as there have been medical records. Fulfilling ROI requests is expensive, inefficient, and frequently, intimidating due to the many rules and regulations regarding the release of patient information as well as the time, cost and effort needed to maintain the process. Faced with these issues, many providers outsource the ROI process to third-party vendors.

There are many vendors that provide ROI management services. The business model used by many of these vendors is not advantageous to the provider because:

• Many of their processes are manually done by low wage workers resulting in high error rates. Ultimately, these errors reflect on the provider.

• A large portion of ROI requests are chargeable and the revenue accrues to the vendor rather than the provider.

Healthcare providers should reconsider their ability to manage the ROI process because there are solutions available now that assure compliance, quality and offer the ability to charge ROI fees. Some of these solutions include the ability to automate payment collection for ROI requests, manage all aspects of the ROI process, offer audit capabilities and provide low cost and secure electronic delivery.

Here are features that a well designed in-house ROI program should include.

Requester database. A requester database consists of contact data for frequent requesters of medical records. It's important to audit the database on a regular basis and contact data should be specifically audited. A breach of patient information could occur if records are sent to an invalid contact address or fax number.

Requester verification and authentication. Legitimate requesters of medical records should be verified and authenticated prior to releasing records. The patient signed authorization needs to clearly indicate who the records are to be released to and the requester must have a reasonable care or business need to receive the information.

Invoicing. Invoicing is very important to a successful release of information process and invoiced amounts should be calculated quickly and accurately.

Rate schedules. States have different rate schedules for allowed charges. In addition, certain requesters have specialized rates within their respective states. Charging correctly for a request for patient information is an integral part of a well managed ROI process and reduces the need for rework.

Secure retrieval that eliminates fax and postal mail. Delivering information via the postal service or by fax is not secure, cost effective and there's no reliable way to track receipt. Information sent through a secure portal with validation parameters and an audit trail is a best practice.

Page deletion capability. It's a le-

gal requirement to choose only the exact pages released to the requester and it should be able to be done easily and quickly.

Audit logs. HIPAA requires that a healthcare provider maintain a disclosure log of all instances where a patient's PHI has been released. The easiest and most cost-effective way to maintain this disclosure log is via a comprehensive ROI solution.

There are significant challenges facing health care providers today and all opportunities to reduce expenses and increase revenues should be explored. Managing an in-house ROI process might be the best place to begin.

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