CUSTOMER STORY: RURAL 9 NETWORK

AAPC BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Goals

- Maximize grant funding through training that boosts revenue across the entire network
- Enhance provider coding and documentation to minimize denials
- Empower clinic leadership to optimize workflow management and streamline operations

RURAL 9
UTAH RURAL INDEPENDENT HOSPITAL NETWORK

Industry
Healthcare

Headquarters
Utah, United States

Network Size:
9 Independent Rural Hospitals

Overview

The Rural 9 Network, a group of nine independent rural hospitals in Utah, recognized a critical need for improved provider coding and documentation to reduce claim denials. In collaboration with AAPC, the network implemented a training program customized to address the unique challenges rural healthcare providers face, aimed to equip both providers and clinic leaders across multiple specialties with the skills to improve coding accuracy and operational efficiency.

Approach

Matt McCullough, Ph.D., the director of the Rural 9 Network, faced a challenge when Liz Brown, the HR Director at Gunnison Valley Hospital, reached out in search of training to enhance provider coding and documentation.

Recognizing an opportunity to support more than just Gunnison Valley, Matt decided to leverage an **HRSA grant** from the state-funded Utah Flex program to include eight other hospitals in the search for a training solution. **AAPC stood out as the ideal partner due to their extensive expertise and ability to train a wide range of healthcare workers, from physicians to coders.**

To create a tailored program, Matt and his colleagues from the rural hospitals collaborated with Melissa Kudela, an AAPC Custom Training expert. Together, they created a comprehensive plan that included:

- **Provider Training:** Six 1-hour live training sessions were conducted for hospital providers, focusing on E/M coding, ICD-10-CM coding, and specialty-specific topics like OB/GYN, family practice, and emergency services.

- **Leadership Training:** Six 2-hour live virtual sessions for clinic leadership covered coding management, revenue cycle management, and operational improvements.

"The return on investment for better coding and documentation is a big deal. They'll [the hospitals] find additional revenue long term because of having better coders and billing practices."
- Matt McCullough, Rural 9 Network Director

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A key advantage of the program was its virtual format, which allowed providers and leaders to participate without disrupting their schedules.

Attendees earned CEUs that could be applied toward their certification requirements and became members of an AAPC Corporate Membership, gaining access to continued education, certifications, and the Codify tool. This partnership not only met the training needs of the Rural 9 Network, but also laid the foundation for continuous improvement and education within their teams.

"We have already seen an increase in better coding in our clinic and a better understanding of denials for our billers and denial follow-up has been more successful."
- Teresa Brooks, San Juan Health

Results

- **Improved Accuracy:** Providers gained a better understanding of coding and documentation, reducing the risk of claim denials.
- **Better Compliance:** Staff enhanced their understanding of ICD-10-CM coding and medical necessity guidelines.
- **Empowered Leaders:** Clinic leaders gained the tools to streamline workflows, enhance patient care, and improve financial sustainability.
- **Expanded Participation:** With 150 attendees, the program far surpassed the target of 35-40, showing strong demand for the training.
- **Ongoing Benefits:** Hospitals received recorded sessions for onboarding, refresher courses, and future staff development.
- **Cost-Effective Training:** Federal grant funds and pooled resources reduced costs, making high-quality training accessible to all hospitals in the network.

Post-Training Success

Trainees were surveyed about their experience:

- **100% of participants** felt the training provided practical, relevant examples.
- **98% reported** improved competence and confidence in the topic.
- **96% agreed** the training was customized to their specific job needs.

To find out how AAPC can empower your healthcare organization with industry-leading coding and compliance expertise, visit **aapc.com/custom-training.**