

# CASE STUDY

## THE HEALTH ALLIANCE OF GREATER CINCINNATI

**PROVIDER PROFILE** | **TYPE:** *Not-For-Profit* | **BED SIZE:** 1,700

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– Shawn Kent, Director,  
Chargemaster Services  
The Health Alliance of  
Greater Cincinnati

### SITUATION

With a focus on providing high quality, cost-effective and accessible care, The Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati meets the healthcare needs of the Tri-state region of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. With more than 1,700 beds and over 17,000 employees, the Health Alliance is the area’s largest health system, serving the region through The Christ Hospital, The University Hospital, The St. Luke Hospitals, The Jewish Hospital, The Fort Hamilton Hospital, The Drake Center and the physicians of Alliance Primary Care.

The Health Alliance maintains one chargemaster for the entire health care system, managing nearly 15,000 active codes. Until 2004, the hospital’s Chargemaster Services department handled its coding and reimbursement using hardcopy reference books and the CMS website. To update the chargemaster, the team would manually search for new codes, and then cross-reference them against their own records.

“It was back and forth, very manual, very tedious,” said Shawn Kent, Director of Chargemaster Services. “We built lots of things in spreadsheets, kind of homegrown tracking mechanisms. In such an archaic environment, we didn’t have time to look proactively at other net revenue opportunities out there.”

### AN AUTOMATED, EASY-TO-MAINTAIN CHARGEMASTER SOLUTION

When Kent was appointed director of the department, transitioning to an automated chargemaster solution ranked high on his list of priorities. He began evaluating half a dozen solutions, but quickly eliminated some of the smaller, less established companies and products. “We are a cutting-edge organization,” said Kent. “We needed to go with the best.”

Ultimately, Accuro, a MedAssets company, stood out for several key reasons. The Web-based model brought an ease of maintenance not available in other applications. With the ASP solution, the organization wouldn’t need to invest in any new hardware or require the Information Services and Technology department to maintain it. This translated to a lower total cost of ownership, minimal maintenance and a shorter, easier implementation process. “We could flip it on and be ready to go,” said Kent.

Plus, Accuro offered all the functionality the team needed at an affordable price. By contrast, a competing solution would have cost the organization considerably more in terms of application, hardware and maintenance costs, and would have taken three to five weeks to bring online.

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### ONE SOURCE FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

Health Alliance relies on CodeCorrect CDM to help improve charge capture, achieve and maintain profitability, increase the percentage of clean claims, and maintain chargemaster accuracy and coding compliance.

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Additionally, the department leverages CodeCorrect Knowledge to ensure accurate coding, so it never misses revenue opportunities. Likewise, Accuro Revenue-Dashboard allows the department to evaluate and better manage its APC performance by allowing it to review and analyze the profitability of individual APCs across multiple Health Alliance departments.

Accuro’s integrated, Web-based suite of applications has become the department’s single source for up-to-date information.

The department uses Accuro tools to ensure it maximizes every possible revenue opportunity. For example, the application might point out codes that most hospitals usually bill together, but aren’t being billed by Health Alliance. This kind of information prompts the organization to examine coding practices and in many cases, immediately begin collecting additional revenue.

The team also stays abreast of CMS codes without having to resort to print publications or other Web sites. As part of the CodeCorrect CDM, the department receives e-mail Informants® that alert the organization about code changes. The team has found this value-added tool useful because each change is linked to specific chargemaster line items affected. Each Informant is sent to appropriate individuals or departments based on the codes affected facilitating swift modifications to the CDM. “Informants prompt us via e-mail instead of forcing us to sift through and research each change,” said Kent.

Accuro has also helped Health Alliance prepare for annual price adjustments and ensure prices are appropriate. Accuro accelerated this annual process by providing reports about Health Alliance’s fees relative to fee

schedule, and pointing to areas where the organization could make changes.

“We are very confident in the pricing strategy we have now,” said Kent. “By using Accuro tools, we are able to look for revenue during our annual price adjustment in places that were previously overlooked.”

Beyond the value of the applications themselves, Kent also appreciates Accuro’s extraordinary level of customer service. “The level of customer service you get from Accuro far exceeds the others,” he said. “Our account manager bends over backwards to provide whatever training or educational materials we need.”

### RESULTS: NEW-FOUND TIME AND RESOURCES DRIVE HIGHER REVENUE CAPTURE

With Accuro, Health Alliance has significantly reduced the time it takes to locate correct coding information. The coders simply type in a key word or code, and everything it needs is there. “The amount of time it saves us is phenomenal,” said Kent, and the team’s time is freed to listen to clinician concerns and educate staff on charge capture.

The results have more than paid for the Accuro products, Kent said.

“Since moving to Accuro, we have more time to look at areas we might not have looked at in prior years because we just didn’t have time,” said Kent. “That helps us meet our margin. This department has gone from being a ‘back room operation’ to making a significant contribution to the Health Alliance bottom line.”

### ABOUT ACCURO, A MEDASSETS COMPANY

Accuro’s revenue management solutions help providers achieve optimal financial results in an era of diminishing resources and expanding regulatory complexities. Our Web-based tools help maintain an accurate chargemaster to improve reimbursement and ensure compliance; calculate expected payment; address transparent pricing issues with rational, yet optimum prices; monitor and manage payor performance, and deliver pioneering business analytics, including denials management.