

Revenue Cycle Management for EMS

How One EMS Company Is Accelerating Cashflows, Faster and More Efficiently



The Road to Revenue Cycle Success: Community Ambulance

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies were initially founded to focus on delivering emergency care, specifically trauma and related events. However, over the course of the past decade, the healthcare system has evolved such that EMS agencies are now expected to take greater responsibility for the patients they transport, both clinically and financially, in a way that reduces overall cost. Market forces including a rapidly evolving regulatory environment and increasing costs are now putting unprecedented additional pressure on EMS agencies to maintain best-in-class revenue cycles.

Community Ambulance, headquartered in Henderson, Nevada, was founded in 2010 by a team of seasoned EMS professionals with a mission to deliver the highest quality patient transport care for emergency transports. The agency significantly expanded its scope in the years that followed to also offer non-emergency transports and special events services. As Community grew, it faced and surmounted challenges that put the company at the forefront of its industry – most notably, its heroic treatment of concertgoers at the tragic mass shooting in 2017 at the Route 91 Harvest music festival in the heart of its Las Vegas home.



To maintain efficient billing operations while remaining focused on patient care, Community Ambulance opted to outsource its billing to a third-party vendor from the onset – but soon experienced bumps in the road with three different companies over the course of seven years. Whether lacking personalized customer service or required EMS/Fire expertise, none of the billing vendors delivered the complete, end-to-end solution that Community was looking for. In 2017, Community Ambulance was awarded a new contract that tripled its call volume – a huge boost for business, but a challenge for its billing vendor to keep up with. Community realized it was time to begin the search for a true revenue cycle management partner who could “get it right” and see it through the next phase in its evolution and beyond.

Identifying Requirements, Based On Lessons Learned

As a first step, the Community Ambulance team took a retrospective look at the evolution of their existing revenue cycle to pinpoint the recurring challenges they wanted to avoid as well as identify new capabilities they knew they needed to maintain their growth trajectory. The team ultimately honed its list down to four “high-impact” requirements, based on prior pain points:

1

Responsiveness.

Their most recent billing company had touted extensive follow-through tactics and an aggressive approach to chasing revenue. While engagement initially met expectations, as Community’s business grew, the follow-through its billing vendor had promised quickly vanished. Instead, their staff began focusing only on the low-hanging fruit – ignoring the copay collections and transports that required extra work. Moreover, customer service was lacking and questions from the Community Ambulance team repeatedly would go unanswered. Community wanted a RCM partner that would guarantee follow-up on all claims, regardless of size, to ensure no money was being left on the table.

2

Accurate and Complete Reporting.

With a focus on continuous operational improvement, the Community Ambulance team was eager to pore over the performance metrics delivered by their billing company. Unfortunately, what they uncovered were incomplete and inaccurate reports, suggesting that while their vendor was eager to show where they excelled, they failed to disclose gaps or areas for improvement. In some cases, promised revenue reports were never even delivered. Community’s management needed daily visibility into key metrics like daily cash deposits and payor mix that directly impact business decisions, available at their fingertips.

3

Industry Expertise.

In a rapidly evolving regulatory environment, one of the primary objectives the Community Ambulance team had when working with an outside billing vendor was to receive oversight and guidance when it came to compliance. What they found was that their billing company failed to stay current with changing rules, did not adapt their billing processes to meet the requirements for specific regions or payors, and inconsistently interpreted “medical necessity”. Moving forward, Community valued dedicated expertise in coding and compliance for the EMS/Fire industry.

4

Ability to Forecast Revenue.

As Community Ambulance sought to grow its business, they wanted to identify opportunities for investment. Unfortunately, its billing vendors lacked the technology and expertise to turn data into actionable insights and were unable to predict future revenue streams, leaving Community in the dark. Community knew that it needed a dedicated team to help it manage complex reimbursement calculations and anticipated revenue streams, including projected cash flow for 15, 30, 60 and 90 days.

Furthermore, the Community Ambulance team was looking for new capabilities to help accelerate their agency’s growth, including:

- Exceptionally efficient processes, from initial dispatch to account closure;
- A culture that drives accountability, transparency and follow-through, ensuring no money is left on the table;
- State-of-the-art technology to support insurance verification, claim scrubbing, and more;
- Identification and closure of documentation gaps, including feedback to support documentation improvement;

Moreover, this solution would need to be scalable and flexible to meet clinical and financial business objectives without overly burdening operating expenses. While these requirements set a high bar, they wanted to ensure that, moving forward, they had a true partner in revenue cycle management – not just a vendor.



Identifying the Best Fit

After thorough research and vetting of multiple options, Community Ambulance selected Integra Connect to be its RCM partner. The deciding factors: Integra Connect's culture, expertise, value-added services and robust, end-to-end technology platform. Additionally, Integra Connect's high-performing Six Sigma operations offered low-cost yet scalable best-in-class RCM services, meaning it could scale as Community Ambulance continued to grow its business. Moreover, Integra Connect's solution offered complementary services that other vendors had not even contemplated to support Community Ambulance's business objectives. These included real-time analytics delivered to mobile devices for on-the-go insights into business performance; a multi-layered auditing system to support compliance with evolving regulatory and enrollment requirements; and technology-enabled data capture to fill gaps and ensure cleaner claims.

"With Integra Connect, we have found a true RCM partner, whose culture, approach and industry expertise complement our own. We have been very pleased with our initial experiences and look forward to leveraging the insightful analytics delivered by Integra Connect to identify opportunities to augment the growth and financial health of our business." Brian Anderson, general manager, Community Ambulance.



The Results: Increased Revenue, Greater Efficiency

By transitioning RCM operations to Integra Connect, Community Ambulance successfully accelerated cash flows, increased compliance and gained control over complex contract performance. After the first 6 months, Community Ambulance had already boosted efficiency - reducing days sales outstanding by two-thirds and denial rates to just five percent. Furthermore, it experienced more than 60% reduction in accounts receivables older than 90 days and increased daily cash deposits by nearly 13%, resulting in a powerful financial boost to the business.

Metric	Improvement
DSO	66% Decrease
90+ AR \$	61.5% Decrease
Daily Cash Deposits	12.8% Increase
Increased Capture of Procedures Delivered	12.5% Increase

Closing Remarks

While searching for a new RCM partner may seem daunting at first, what Community Ambulance learned is that, by first defining and prioritizing the key attributes they would look for, they were able to narrow down the options to an optimal fit based on business culture, operational approach, and experience. The success of its choice soon became apparent in measurable improvements to the key financial and process metrics that drove its business.





IntegraConnect

About Integra Connect

Integra Connect is the market leader in comprehensive end-to-end revenue cycle management technology and services for EMS organizations, health systems-based emergency medicine, and hospitalist groups. Our mission is to transform revenue cycle management by delivering fully-integrated, cloud-based technologies and services – designed to meet the evolving needs of our clients and the market – to maximize financial and operational success while advancing quality of patient service.

Learn more at:

www.integraconnect.com/ems