Key revenue cycle management outsourcing trends

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In brief:

- The healthcare industry is under increasing pressure to improve revenue cycle efficiency due to rising costs, regulatory changes, and the need for enhanced patient experiences. This is driving a surge in RCM outsourcing.
- Key trends include the adoption of AI and automation to streamline processes, a move towards nearshore outsourcing for better communication and compliance, and a rising demand for end-to-end RCM solutions.
- Outsourcing RCM offers significant benefits such as cost reduction, improved efficiency, enhanced revenue capture, and access to specialized expertise.
- The future of RCM outsourcing will likely see greater integration of AI, advanced analytics, and a continued focus on value-based reimbursement models.

The healthcare industry is under mounting pressure to revamp its revenue cycle management (RCM) processes.

Rising costs, complex regulations, and the heightened demand for improved patient experiences are straining resources and threatening the financial stability of healthcare providers. These pressures often force providers to prioritize immediate needs over RCM optimization, which causes inefficiencies. Consequently, such shortcomings in RCM are leading to substantial revenue loss. In fact, according to the 2020 CAQH Index, healthcare providers could have saved \$16.3 billion, or 42 percent of the \$39 billion spent on administrative tasks, by streamlining these processes.

To overcome these challenges, many organizations are turning to outsourcing as a strategic solution because it helps them gain efficiency, minimize expenses, and improve patient

satisfaction. This article will examine the key RCM outsourcing trends that are shaping the future of this rapidly evolving field.

Increased adoption of AI and automation

<u>AI and automation</u> are revolutionizing RCM by dramatically enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and speed in processing tasks. Key applications include generative AI for call centers, natural language processing (<u>NLP</u>) for billing code assignment, predictive algorithms for denial reduction, and AI-powered chatbots for patient-centered communication. These innovations reduce administrative burdens, accelerate cash flow, and create better overall experiences.

The widespread adoption of AI is evident in a recent survey that found <u>46 percent</u> of hospitals and health systems now use AI in their RCM operations, marking a notable increase from previous years. Additionally, <u>74 percent</u> of hospitals are implementing revenue-cycle automation, including robotic process automation (RPA). This industry-wide shift underscores the growing commitment to streamlining operations and cutting costs.

The impact is substantial: Generative AI boosts call center productivity by <u>15 to 30 percent</u>, while AI-driven NLP systems have increased coder output by more than <u>40 percent</u> at one hospital. Predictive algorithms reduce prior-authorization denials by 22 percent and service-related denials by 18 percent, freeing up <u>30 to 35 hours per week</u> previously spent on appeals. AI-powered chatbots also simplify payment processing and communication. Collectively, these technological advancements lead to significant cost savings and better financial outcomes.

Nearshoring as a preferred outsourcing model

Geographic proximity and cultural alignment are driving the increased adoption of nearshoring for RCM outsourcing. Countries like <u>Costa Rica</u> and <u>Colombia</u> offer large cost benefits over onshore solutions while also strengthening communication and collaboration. This helps mitigate many of the challenges typically associated with offshoring. However, robust compliance and security protocols are essential. Ultimately, the optimal outsourcing strategy depends on each organization's unique needs and goals.

Nearshoring delivers cost savings of 30 to 60 percent compared to onshore alternatives, while maintaining the advantages of real-time connections. This cost-effectiveness helps fuel growth in the global RCM outsourcing market, which is projected to reach \$34.67 billion in 2025 (a 13.6 percent annual increase from 2024) and \$67.35 billion by 2029 (an 18.1 percent compound annual growth rate). The Latin American healthcare business process outsourcing (BPO) industry, growing at a steady 10 percent annually, is expected to surpass \$33 billion by 2027.

According to the <u>Journal of AHIMA</u>, claim denials—affecting <u>10 to 15 percent</u> of provider submissions—cost hospitals an average of \$5 million annually. Implementing AI-driven automation and predictive analytics in outsourced RCM has reduced billing errors by <u>30 to 40 percent</u>, considerably improving first-time claim approvals, maximizing revenue retention, and minimizing losses associated with denials.

Emphasis on compliance and security

Building on the nearshoring discussion, robust compliance and data protection are paramount. The mass digitization of healthcare operations necessitates strict adherence to regulations like HIPAA and GDPR. Outsourcing partners must implement stringent security frameworks, utilize secure cloud platforms, and demonstrate their commitment to data protection through certifications such as ISO 27001 and HITRUST. Failure to meet these standards can result in hefty financial penalties and reputational damage. The sharper focus on compliance reflects a growing awareness of the severe risks associated with mishandling sensitive patient data.

Growing demand for end-to-end RCM services

The demand for fully integrated RCM solutions is rising as healthcare providers seek to simplify operations and address intensifying cost and regulatory pressures. Consolidating the entire revenue cycle into a seamless system minimizes errors, enhances workflow efficiency, and provides valuable financial insights. This approach also capitalizes on AI-driven automation and nearshoring while ensuring compliance with stringent security standards.

The shift to value-based reimbursement models

Value-based care is fundamentally reshaping RCM, driving demand for specialized outsourcing solutions. Success in this model hinges on accurately tracking key performance metrics, such as patient outcomes, readmission rates, and claims efficiency.

Unlike traditional fee-for-service structures, value-based models prioritize measurable health improvements while controlling costs. To flourish in this environment, organizations must leverage advanced data analytics to monitor key indicators and refine reimbursement strategies accordingly.

Outsourcing partners bring specialized expertise in risk-based payment structures, performance optimization, and adapting to evolving reimbursement frameworks. They provide the analytical tools necessary to track critical metrics, ensuring fair compensation for high-value care.

Furthermore, they streamline billing and coding processes to align with contract requirements under value-based payment systems.

The benefits of RCM outsourcing

The healthcare industry is grappling with <u>skyrocketing administrative costs</u>, regulatory complexities, and increasing demands for improved patient experiences. Partnering with an experienced RCM outsourcing provider offers a strategic solution to fortify financial performance, operational efficiency, and patient satisfaction. By accessing specialized expertise and cutting-edge technologies, healthcare organizations can navigate these challenges and achieve:

- Minimizing costs and maximizing efficiency: Streamlined workflows, automation, and lower administrative overhead allow internal teams to devote more time to patient care. <u>According to Deloitte</u>, outsourcing RCM can cut expenses by 20 to 30 percent, primarily through reductions in overhead costs.
- **Boost revenue capture:** Improved accuracy, proactive denial management, and faster claims processing help reduce revenue leakage. AI-driven automation has reduced billing errors by 30 to 40 percent, greatly improving the rate of first-time claim approvals.
- Strengthen compliance and security: Experienced partners help maintain strict adherence to regulatory requirements while implementing advanced security protocols, reducing risks and preventing costly penalties.
- Enhance the patient experience: Clearer billing processes and improved communication lead to higher patient satisfaction and retention. A report released by ZipDo found that healthcare organizations outsourcing billing see a 20 percent increase in patient satisfaction scores.

Strengthen RCM with a trusted partner

Rising expenses, regulatory hurdles, and evolving patient needs pose significant challenges for healthcare providers. Outsourcing RCM offers a strategic solution. By leveraging automation, AI-powered insights, and industry expertise, healthcare organizations can streamline operations, minimize claim denials, and strengthen compliance.

Is your RCM lagging? Auxis offers comprehensive outsourcing solutions designed for your long-term success.

Schedule a consultation today!