



Ortho Northeast Leverages Centricity™ Practice Solution to Help Streamline Workflows, Save \$800,000 and Increase Throughput by 49 Percent

Whether it be declining reimbursement rates, regulatory hurdles, recent merger and acquisition activity, or the impending shift from fee-for-service to pay-for-performance, industry change is putting tremendous operational and financial performance pressure on ambulatory practices. In this transitional period of healthcare, the ability to remain an independent practice seems to be directly related to the ability to adapt and to drive profitability.

This case study analyzes how a successful orthopedic practice leveraged their EMR and PM software (Centricity Practice Solution) to drive productivity through their practice. Empowered with operational decision support from Centricity Practice Solution, Ortho Northeast made simple workflow adjustments that nearly tripled exam room utilization for recheck patients and decreased x-ray cycle time by almost 50 percent – saving \$800,000 in construction costs and enabling throughput for rehabilitation and physical therapy to increase by 49 percent.

A Successful Practice Decides to Expand and Drive Performance

Ortho Northeast, a premier orthopedic practice in the Greater Fort Wayne Indiana area, was looking for ways to increase profitability.

The group focused on one specific office, hoping to grow the number of physicians from four to eight and to increase x-ray volume from 75 to 150 exams per day. The challenge the practice faced was uncovering how to double throughput without doubling exam rooms and figuring out how to avoid adding an additional x-ray room to the facility.

Leveraging Centricity Practice Solution to Nearly Triple Exam Room Utilization

To get an idea of how to double throughput without doubling exam rooms, Rhonda K. Draper, RN, and Director of Patient Care Services at Ortho Northeast, turned to the staff and EMR data to learn about any issues with the facility's current workflow. She identified a workflow that prevented optimal utilization of their facilities. Patients were tying up two rooms during their visit, and often exam rooms and x-ray rooms were left unused. She also learned that recheck patients spent almost no time in the exam room before leaving for x-ray. This prompted Draper to advocate for using Centricity Practice Solution for operational decision support.

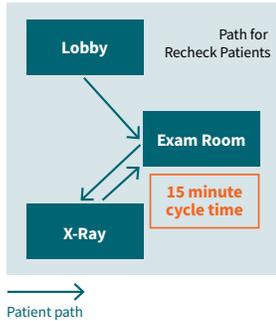
Using Centricity Practice Solution, the team identified recheck patients when they registered in the lobby. Workers were then notified to send these patients directly to x-ray, thus leaving the exam room open for another patient. It turned out that this



simple adjustment had a powerful impact. As indicated in the figure below, sending re-check patients directly to x-ray reduced the patient cycle time from 15 minutes to 6 minutes. The team could now get more patients per day into the exam rooms and overcame the challenge of doubling throughput without having to double exam rooms. Better utilization of the existing exam rooms also allowed Ortho Northeast to repurpose space for rehabilitation and physical therapy services, increasing throughput in these areas by 49 percent.

Before

Exam room utilization was poor



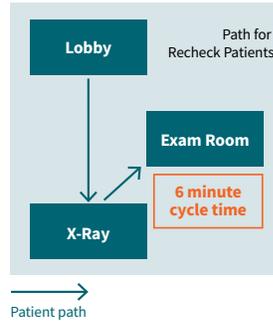
Productivity waster:

- Motion
- Resource idle time

Why leave an exam room unoccupied during X-ray?
Use the software to determine who can go directly to X-ray.

After

Exam room utilization improved nearly 3-fold



Benefits:

- Exam room turnaround time
- Physician utilization
- Patient satisfaction

Exam room utilization for recheck patients nearly tripled

Centricity Practice Solution Helped Cut X-Ray Cycle Time Nearly in Half, Averting \$800,000 in Construction Costs

After adapting the facility's workflow to maximize room utilization, the team focused on the potential need for an additional x-ray room to handle the proposed traffic increase. Here again, the team leveraged Centricity Practice Solution for operational decision support. Previously, the x-ray tech was spending a great deal of time escorting patients to and from x-ray. This left the x-ray room open and unutilized. Team members then suggested using runners (current administrative employees) to escort patients instead. What made this approach successful was that Ortho Northeast leveraged Centricity Practice Solution as an operational guidance system to alert the runners when and where patients needed to be escorted. The new workflow reduced x-ray room cycle time from 19 minutes to 10 minutes. As a result, the projected new volume of patients would easily be accommodated by the existing x-ray rooms.

Conclusion

By leveraging Centricity Practice Solution, Ortho Northeast streamlined workflows, saved the practice money, and laid the groundwork for an expansion that would accommodate the targeted number of patients. These adjustments allowed the facility to nearly triple exam room utilization, which then enabled the practice to increase throughput for radiology and for therapy by 49 percent. The facility also avoided \$800,000 in construction costs by not adding a new x-ray room. As an added benefit, the facility noted an increase in patient satisfaction rates as patients were happier with shorter, more streamlined visits.



“Everything we did was possible because Centricity Practice Solution was customizable. We used it to take a look at the flow of the patient and determine what needed to happen.”



Rhonda K. Draper, RN

Director of Patient Care Services
Ortho Northeast