

# Case Study: The Center



## Physician Practice Expands Service Lines with a Focus on Patient Experience

### Challenge

Replacing an ineffective stock and bill program with a practice-owned orthotics and durable medical equipment (DME) service line.

### Solution

Taking control of the patient experience and revenue cycle management by implementing Breg Impact.

### Results

Bringing this service line inhouse aligned with The Center's patient centric approach of delivering health care by raising the level of the patient experience along with maximizing the value proposition of a practice owned and operated DME program.

- Better patient experience by providing orthotic and DME needs as a part of the patient encounter while lowering patient costs wherever possible
- DME revenue growth of 12-17% annually, in line with other ancillary services
- Reduced staff time spent on DME related paperwork by approximately 60-70%
- Provided more comprehensive care and follow through for patients

The Center offers a comprehensive range of musculoskeletal services across Central Oregon at its four primary locations, with visiting specialist clinics in outlying areas to serve rural populations. The group's 42 providers conduct approximately 100,000 patient visits annually. Its 21 physicians perform on average 200 surgeries and procedures each week. Beyond the expertise and quality of their services, The Center focuses on sports injury prevention to keep Central Oregon youth healthy, active, and strong. They partner with many elite athletic clubs and sports organizations throughout the region. Through The Center Foundation, they also provide athletic trainers and team physicians to six local high schools.

In 2011, during the middle of a severe economic downturn, The Center did what many practices would never consider at such a challenging time. They made a significant change to their business by disrupting their stock and bill program in favor of taking complete ownership of their orthotics and DME offering.

"The Center has always been an entrepreneurial-minded group," said Michael Gonsalves, The Center CEO. "We saw the downturn as an opportunity. It was clear that cost pressures were only going to increase and the debt burden for private practices would continue to rise. We needed to be proactive in order to continue delivering the best service in the most affordable manner." The Center also saw a chance to enhance the patient experience by owning and managing the DME program.

Patients too were feeling the effects of the financial crisis. With an in-house orthotics and DME ancillary service The Center could actively manage product costs for patients, provide "one stop" care – especially important in rural areas where patients might have to drive some distance between providers. "Because we set our own pricing, in many cases we've been able to reduce the product cost to the patient over the previous stock and bill charges," Michael added, "and improve patient satisfaction overall."

*"We always try to treat patients conservatively before considering surgery. Breg's program allows us to provide everything the patient needs in the exam room at the time of their appointment. It makes our patients happy and streamlines the entire process for staff."*



Timothy Bollom, MD  
Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine  
The Center Board President

The Center received proposals from several companies who help providers set up and manage in-house service lines. "The Breg Impact program just stood out," said Matt Stutz, Cast Room and DME Supervisor. "We liked the quality of the products, the process they laid out and their depth of experience." The practice saw positive results almost immediately. "We already had MRI and X-ray in house," said Derek Garrett, The Center CFO. "We were surprised that our DME program has become similar in size and profit to our other ancillary services. In fact, our DME revenue has doubled since we initiated the program five years ago."

Additionally, Breg's Vision DMEPOS software has replaced former paper processes, reducing time for staff and increasing efficiency with a more automated system. Breg Vision® has further streamlined product dispensing, enabling The Center providers to fit patients with products and sign electronically without being tethered to a computer while managing inventory in real time. Matt estimates Breg Vision has reduced staff time spent on paperwork by 60-70 percent.

"Our experience with Breg, from our Breg Impact consultant, to the sales reps to the Customer Care team is always exceptional," said Matt. "They are proactive in communicating state and federal changes that could impact us, anticipate our needs, and they are always there when we need them."

The decision to take control during a time of uncertainty was the right call for The Center. "Having DME in-house is good for everyone," Michael said. "It's better for our financial health and independence, it's better for our physicians who can spend more time with patients, it's better for our staff who can do more important things than paperwork, and it's better for our patients who get exceptional care all in one visit."