

Tapping multiple tools to meet practice challenges



Long Beach Gastroenterology Associates is the largest privately-owned group of gastrointestinal specialists in Southern California's Long Beach/Orange County area. Founded in 1983, it is home to 16 providers and three mid-level providers. The practice expects 20-25% growth within the next two years.

INDEPENDENCE AND EXCELLENT CARE

Long Beach Gastroenterology is committed to maintaining the highest quality of care. The practice does that by staying on the forefront of medical and support solutions that improve patient outcomes and practice efficiency. The biggest challenges stem from the countless economic and regulatory pressures that drive so many practices to sell to larger hospital systems or other large organizations. Those challenges include ever-increasing government and private insurance reimbursement requirements, and the shift to value-based care in both private and government insurance programs.

"That quality of care only comes about when you have autonomy," said Long Beach Gastroenterology COO Linda Watson. "If you join a large health system, sometimes you lose some or all of that, so I think that's an overwhelming concern for our physicians."

As COO, Watson must ensure that the practice stays ahead of a changing reimbursement landscape that includes increased patient responsibility under high-deductible plans, MIPS, and other value-based care reporting programs. She has come to rely on Greenway Health technology and tools to help her succeed.

A MULTI-FACETED PARTNERSHIP

Most significantly, Long Beach Gastroenterology relies on the Greenway Health EHR and practice management systems to promote efficiencies

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- Linda Watson, COO,
Long Beach Gastroenterology

from patient care to practice operations. "Without Greenway as a partner," Watson said, "I don't know how we would have met our measures for meaningful use. They've been just fabulous in providing tools that are easy to use. It gives our physicians an opportunity to really practice medicine and not be so worried about ticking boxes."

The Greenway system touches many aspects of the practice. Patients book appointments through it, and receive notifications, authorizations, and appointment confirmations via text and email. Practitioners use it to chart and code, while Watson uses its analytics to mine data that improve business decision-making. In fact, the depth of data that Greenway provides helps the practice on its journey to value-based care. "Greenway provides us with the tools to help us stay abreast of a lot of the required reporting," Watson said. "Where Greenway is going to help us a lot is in patient communication and through the web portal. I think that's going to be a savior in terms of some of the measures I'm going to have to be reporting to." As a testament to the value of the data Greenway provides in developing sound business practices, Watson points to the practice's average of 26 days in A/R.

ANALYTICS AND SUPPORT

In addition to the headline EHR and practice management systems, Watson also accesses the array of the educational and operational tools that



Greenway provides. For instance, Greenway's data analytics gives Watson real-time practice information. "I get great quality data from Practice Analytics which allows me to make quick, smart decisions about what contracts to pursue or renegotiate."

Another metric Greenway helps her track is physician FTE — the number of hours each physician works relative to the number of supporting staff members. A lower number suggests a more efficient operation. "This can go from 2.5 to 5," Watson said. "Greenway-inspired efficiencies have helped us to stay at the lower end of employees per physician FTE. In MGMA benchmarking, we're in the top quartile."

While data analytics helps Watson keep efficiency high, other Greenway tools and add-ons help her stay informed, and keep both efficiency and patient satisfaction high. She attends Greenway's educational webinars regularly to get "a summary of what's going on and what to anticipate. They show how the product is going to help me and what I need to do to make it work."

Watson praised Greenway's technical support, but she also leverages its Community Forum for more casual assistance. "Greenway's support team has always been great in helping me with specific issues," she said. "Using the Community Forum, it's nice to hear what other people are doing and how they've solved problems. When we have a new program or a new issue, the Forum is one of the first places I go. It saves me a lot of time in problem solving."

LEVERAGING THIRD-PARTY EXPERTISE

Through the Greenway Marketplace — a collection of third-party system enhancements — the practice discovered Phreesia, an add-on that increases patient intake efficiency while enhancing the intake experience.

Key outcomes

- An average of 26 days in A/R
- \$60,000 in collections without any staff involvement
- Efficiencies keep practice in highest quartile in FTEs per doctor

"Phreesia's been amazing," Watson said. "It's allowed us to reach out and communicate with the patient ahead of the visit and introduce them to our practice. They can go online and verify their demographic and insurance information and sign clinical documents. They can even pay in advance. All the paperwork stuff is taken care of ahead of time."

"The other aspect of Phreesia," she said, "is that if a patient has a balance, it allows them to go ahead and make a payment arrangement. I've had a benefit in the first six months of more than \$60K in patient direct payment with payment plans. I didn't have to pay a dime to make those awkward and expensive phone calls in order to collect it. Phreesia just schedules the payment and it's all done."

Long Beach Gastroenterology continues in growth mode, and Watson knows that Greenway programs can scale with them. "There are other programs out there that are less expensive," she said, "but if we'd gone with them we'd be in trouble because of their inability to scale." She values Greenway for the range of tools available to help her succeed despite today's healthcare challenges. "The Greenway programs balance the business needs of a COO with the clinical needs of a practitioner who interacts with patients. Considering the support, value, and quality of technology, I think Greenway is a really good partner."

For more information on Greenway Revenue Services and how Greenway Health can help increase your practice revenue, call 866-242-3805 or visit greenwayhealth.com.