

3M Health Information Systems

Case study:

# Health care organization uses real time prioritization to capture \$7.4M

South Shore Health  
Boston





## Snapshot of **South Shore Health**

Founded in 1922, this not-for-profit organization is the largest independent health system in southeast Massachusetts. As the leading provider of emergency, acute and outpatient care south of Boston, South Shore Health is recognized as the only Level III neonatal intensive care unit in the state and ranks among *The Leapfrog Groups' Top General Hospitals*.

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### **Profile**

**Location:** Boston

**Type:** Health care provider, not-for-profit operator

**Beds:** 400

**Annual patient discharges:** 30,000

**Employees:** 5,400

**Sites of care:** 5

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### **3M products used by South Shore Hospital**

**3M™ 360 Encompass™ System**

## **The challenge: Prioritizing cases for impact and integrity**

In 2019, South Shore Health was struggling to complete documentation for a 400-bed hospital. “I had seven clinical documentation integrity (CDI) specialists: five of them were nurses, and two of them were coders,” said Kim Conner, director of CDI at South Shore Health. “To try to cover all of these beds presented a challenge. How do we pick our right cases?” With limited personnel and ever growing cases, South Shore Health saw a drastic decline in its case mix index (CMI) and revenue impact.

“We wanted to increase complication or comorbidity (CC) and major complication or comorbidity (MCC) capture, increase appropriate revenue on our capture, improve clinical validity for audit and reduce patient safety indicators (PSIs) and hospital acquired conditions (HACs) in real time,” said Conner. “We needed to target specific DRGs. Sepsis and pneumonia were our top two. This was a big issue. We weren’t really maximizing those cases.”

In addition to resource and time constraints, South Shore Health’s medical staff lacked sufficient CDI understanding. “It’s frustrating for physicians. They’re spending less and less time at the bedside and more and more time having to go back to those records,” said Conner.

Lack of clear goals and benchmarks was also a considerable issue for the organization. “We had no denials or denial prevention program. Only the coders were doing the denial appeals and that included the clinical ones. If they came back, we really weren’t disputing a second time. That was a place we needed to focus on pretty quickly,” said Conner. No CDI department is exempt from having denied claims, but failure to prioritize these trouble cases can result in far reaching effects.

“We continue to be asked to do more with less for every department in every hospital, especially since COVID-19. Having 3M tools to assist us to be as efficient and productive as possible was instrumental.”

—Kim Conner  
Director of CDI at South Shore Health

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## The solution: Real time prioritization

To overcome these hurdles, South Shore Health transformed its CDI program by changing how the team prioritized cases with the **3M™ 360 Encompass™ System**. The prioritization feature in 3M 360 Encompass helps CDI teams focus on cases with the greatest CDI opportunities first with initial priority scoring right out of the box. CDI teams can also modify scoring to hone in on specific organizational goals. The scoring updates are based on new patient information or team actions to ensure real time prioritization.

“With the prioritization, CDI specialists could see what surfaced to the top and what they needed to prioritize,” said Conner. This tool identifies high value cases quickly, allowing CDI specialists to target the most complex DRGs, like sepsis and pneumonia, without sacrificing core responsibilities or precious time.

3M 360 Encompass not only identifies high priority opportunities but offers continual assessment and insights. South Shore Health used 3M’s custom reports to regularly analyze performance. “[These reports] have been instrumental. It will show you the averages of your response rates, total of initial and continued review days, your queries and average percentage of queries overall,” said Connor. “It tells us the financial impact. It tells us which physicians are answering and not answering.”

Equipped with a robust clinical intelligence case prioritization engine, including key quality indicator information, South Shore Health implemented its first ever HAC and PSI reduction program and established recurring learning sessions with physicians. “We had a 98 percent response rate from all ICU providers, that is unheard of,” said Conner.

Priority worklist doesn’t just help organizations conquer current issues, it helps prepare for the future. “When COVID-19 hit, Massachusetts got hit pretty hard,” said Connor. “Prioritization was essential for us. We lost the ability to do any elective surgery cases, and the ones we had, we really needed to drill down and make sure to maximize what we could. 3M 360 Encompass was instrumental in making sure documentation for COVID-19 patients was accurate. It was a huge help.”



More than tripled revenue from CDI reviews each month

**3x**



Achieved a  
**98%**  
response rate  
from ICU providers



Increased monthly query percentage by  
**106%**



Decreased sepsis denials by  
**76%**

“To try to bring this all together would have been a very difficult task without the help of 3M. It opened more doors for us to really hone in on things that we wanted to do.”

—Kim Conner  
Director of CDI at South Shore Health

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## The results

Less than two years after implementing priority worklists, South Shore Health captured an additional \$600,000 each month through more accurate documentation and productivity. By prioritizing specific DRGs and maximizing the capture of complications and comorbidities, the health system more than tripled its monthly revenue through CDI reviews.

South Shore Health went from struggling with coding related denials to doubling productivity with one tool. “To try to bring this all together would have been a very difficult task without the help of 3M. It opened more doors for us to really hone in on things that we wanted to do,” said Conner.

A once overwhelmed CDI team that was spread too thin, with a never ending workload, increased their monthly query percentage by an astonishing 106 percent. As the push toward value-based care continues, CDI teams will need to engage physicians, increase productivity and prioritize high opportunities.

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