

Case Study - SpectraSoft AppointmentsPRO

Independent Physical Therapy Carson, CA

“It’s all just a click for me.”

- Robert Avalos, Office Manager

Company Description

Independent Physical Therapy (IPT) of Carson California is one of nine IPT offices serving the greater Los Angeles/Long Beach area. Situated east of Torrance, the practice offers the services of two physical therapists and two aids, and schedules approximately 50 appointments per day. Ninety-eight percent of their patients are referred to the practice by other physicians.

Situation

Before their current scheduling solution was installed, IPT-Carson used a standard appointment book for scheduling. Paper scheduling was manageable because the practice was small. It was not difficult for office aids to maintain appointments for two PTs on paper. Although multiple treatments were common to the course of therapy, most IPT patients preferred to book each one separately. There was not much incentive for office management to speed the process of booking multiple appointments.

But IPT-Carson needed access to more information during the appointment scheduling process. Because the practice took patients by referral (prescription) only, office staff needed to track authorized visits. And because insurance carriers only paid those services that were properly authorized and delivered, staff needed a better way to identify their capitated (HMO) patients and to distinguish between providers (Medicare vs. Private Insurance, vs. Workman’s Comp etc.).

Solution

In October, 1999 Robert Avalos was hired as Office Manager at IPT-Carson. Avalos was comfortable with computers and familiar with a SpectraSoft scheduling solution called Appointments™. He liked Appointments™ because it was straightforward and intuitive. It also had a feature for authorized visit tracking and a place to maintain HMO/Insurance provider information.

The managers at most other IPT’s offices were very hesitant to join IPT-Carson in their foray into computer-based scheduling. But Avalos had a certain degree of discretion at his own site. In Spring of the year 2000 therefore, he bought and installed a single user version of Appointments™. He updated his system as each new SpectraSoft upgrade was released, and made the eventual transition to AppointmentsPRO™ in 2001.

Results

SpectraSoft products have made a significant difference in the professional management of appointment scheduling at IPT-Carson, according to Robert Avalos. Appointments™ enabled IPT staff to view HMO/Insurance provider information in the appointment window, and to track authorized treatments for each patient automatically for the first time.

“We also discovered you could use different colors to code appointments types. That’s been terrific,” he said.

“The way we use the feature – HMO/Insurance provider information has become clear and accessible to everyone. Now our staff can be sure they grab the correct form or deliver the appropriate services just by glancing at the screen. They don’t even have to sit down at the computer. This has increased the accuracy and efficiency of our office considerably.”

The transition from Appointments™ to AppointmentsPRO™ took longer than Avalos expected. It was not like starting from scratch. IPT-Carson had been operating Appointments™ for two years and had accumulated a sizeable database. And, because PRO is a new product – not just an upgrade, “there were some issues.” It took three days to get the new system up and running.

“But I’d never go back,” said Avalos. “AppointmentsPRO™ looks and feels a lot like Appointments™. It has all the same features and benefits, plus more.” Like additional color-coding

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capabilities, he explained, which now allows the office to indicate an insurance co-payment in the appointment window.

“I also like the way AppointmentsPRO™ displays patient referral, diagnosis, and demographic information, he said. “With PRO we don’t have to pull the patient’s chart to get it. That’s a major improvement. PRO also gives us more information for insurance reporting, and the reports themselves are much better,” he said.

AppointmentsPRO™ offers many enhancements, according to Avalos, but the bottom line is – at Independent Physical Therapy of Carson CA,

AppointmentsPRO™ and Appointments™ before it have both paid for themselves many times in office efficiency and customer satisfaction.

“Gone is the amount of time we used to spend when a patient asked for a list of treatment dates (for Workman’s Comp mileage reimbursement forms). “Some of our patients still apologize for asking,” he commented. “But now I tell them – “Not a problem. It’s all just a click for me.”

Independent Physical Therapy has installed AppointmentsPRO™ in three of their nine Southern California locations.

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About SpectraSoft

SpectraSoft Inc. is a leading developer of Windows-based appointment scheduling and resource management software. SpectraSoft’s signature products, *Appointware™*, *AppointmentsPRO™*, and *AppointmentsES™* are installed in more than 3000 facilities nationwide. SpectraSoft’s products have been developed specifically for healthcare and other service oriented industries. For more information and a free demo please contact a sales representative at 1-800-889-0450 or visit our website at www.ssoft.com.