

How benchmarking helps manage your time, identify problem areas

Analytics tool provides LUGPA members insights to improve performance

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Benchmarking involves collecting information from various sources and comparing processes and performance metrics to determine how other businesses achieve their high levels of performance.

It's data collection that urologists can utilize to discover ways to improve their practices.

LUGPA recently teamed with IntrinsicQ Specialty Solutions (IQSS), part of AmerisourceBergen, to support a new benchmarking program powered by InfoDive, IQSS's business analytics solution. This collaboration, LUGPA says, will allow LUGPA member practices to compare independent group practice performance metrics against that of other member practices.

Cass Schaedig, vice president of provider analytics, ION Solutions for AmerisourceBergen, says this benchmarking tool will ultimately enable hundreds of urology practices to manage their time, lower administrative costs, and spend more time with patients while implementing the latest treatments into their practices.

Schaedig spoke with *Urology Times* about the value of benchmarking in patient care, practice management, and health policy.

Urology Times: Characterize how benchmarking data is changing practices in 2019.

Schaedig: By giving practices the ability to quantify the value of their care, particularly in comparison to similar-sized or focused peers, benchmarking helps practices demonstrate their eligibility for appropriate reimbursement to public or private payers. Benchmarking also helps control for a practice's possible overutilization, and it allows providers to identify areas of strength or opportunity, where they can continue investing, or where they may eliminate a service or develop an action plan to address any underperformance.

UT: How can urologists better leverage benchmarking data to enhance the quality of patient care and capitalize on market opportunities?

Schaedig: A sound benchmarking program should gather data from the entire patient treatment journey and allow practices to analyze the



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quality of care holistically. For example, with InfoDive, practices can track how many patients receive a biopsy and, as a result, experience a complication. This gives practices the opportunity to dive deeper and analyze what the root of a problem is and how to avoid it in the future.

UT: What do urologists need to know to utilize InfoDive properly? Is there a significant learning curve?

Schaedig: There is no learning curve for InfoDive; we've worked hard to make it an intuitive tool. We help practices understand how the variables reported in InfoDive relate to one another, so they know what underlying or complementary factors may be contributing a particular result.

For example, a practice may observe a physician has a low volume of new patients. The cause may be that the doctor is treating current patients for diseases that take more time and have a longer course of treatment, and as a result, he or she doesn't have the bandwidth to take on new patients. Before determining a course of action, the practice should review additional data points for more context. That's what we help practices understand: how to look beyond a single indicator and understand the relationships between multiple metrics.

UT: What sets InfoDive apart from other similar platforms?

Schaedig: We are the only source of benchmarking that can provide more detail around relative value units, a measure of value and productivity used in the Medicare reimbursement formula for physician services. We calculate metrics from the raw billing data and apply the exact same cleansing rule and logic to create statistics from the filed claims.

UT: How will the program inform education programs and advocacy priorities?

Schaedig: LUGPA and its member groups can use the insights drawn from the benchmarking program to better inform legislators and other stakeholders on how policies impact both practices and patients. Just as individual practices can

use the data available through this partnership to demonstrate their value to payers, LUGPA can leverage membership-wide insights to demonstrate the value and needs of urology practices across the country.

For example, when a new government rule is proposed that could affect practices, we can apply the proposed changes in InfoDive, so LUGPA groups are able to see the potential impact. Practices can then use that information to shape their responses to legislators' calls for public comment.

UT: Who can participate? Is the program available only to LUGPA member practices?

Schaedig: In order to establish critical practice benchmarks, LUGPA established a task force of informed professionals from member practices to provide oversight for the benchmarking program, establish key metrics, and determine the reporting structure and cadence to members. IQSS will provide consultative support to the task force and, using InfoDive, data analysis for ongoing reporting. The relationship we have with LUGPA offers discounted licensing of InfoDive as well as access to LUGPA-specific benchmarking reports.

UT: How can it improve performance and patient outcomes?

Schaedig: Having access to InfoDive gives practices insights into the full patient care journey, making it easier for practices to identify pain points and where there is room for improvement. The platform provides a view of a practice's performance and operations that's not often visible through its existing billing and EMR systems and can inform how to restructure services to a patient's benefit.

For example, "Physician A" may only do a few procedures of a certain type a year, while "Physician B" may perform a high volume and have a high patient success rate. A group practice may be able to use InfoDive to analyze whether it makes more sense for Physician A to refer his or her patients requiring the procedure to Physician B and focus on other patient needs. Ultimately, InfoDive helps practices to determine the more efficient route that will also protect and promote patient health. **UT**