

## Estimating Patient Responsibility to Collect More



“InstaMed is more than just a payment processor – it has enabled us to manage the entire patient payments process for patients that choose to not mail in payments, all in one place and reduce administrative time to process payments by 25% between our staff and our clients.

- Gina Oates,  
 Project Administrator,  
 Canopy Partners

### BACKGROUND OF CANOPY PARTNERS

Canopy Partners is a management service organization in Greensboro, North Carolina, that offers billing, IT and other administrative services to imaging groups.

### CORE BUSINESS PROBLEM

With the increase in consumer-directed healthcare, patient payments are becoming a more important part of healthcare provider revenue. In order to collect more from patients, Canopy Partners tried to apply new collection processes; however, these processes were very manual and time-consuming, resulting in an administrative burden for its staff and its clients.

### THE SOLUTION

InstaMed delivered Canopy Partners a healthcare-specific payments solution to automate the processes to check eligibility, estimate patient responsibility, offer patient-friendly payment options, and collect, post and reconcile patient payments, all in one place. As a result, Canopy Partners reduced its administrative time and costs to collect patient payments and improved patient engagement.

### BUSINESS RESULTS

Canopy Partners and its clients reduced administrative time to process patient payments by automating eligibility verification and patient responsibility estimation.

### CANOPY PARTNERS' STORY:

#### More than Just a Payment Processor to Collect More from Patients

Canopy Partners needed to implement new tools and processes to collect more patient payments, so the company began using a payment processor that could support payment cards and online patient payments. However, the payment processor was not a healthcare-specific solution and did not offer integration options with Canopy Partners' billing system from Merge Healthcare. Therefore, the payments were collected using a separate system, and staff had to manually post all payments back into the Merge billing system.

Canopy Partners switched to InstaMed because it is integrated with the Merge billing system. Now, Canopy Partners uses the same system for eligibility requests and payments, and payments post automatically to the Merge billing system.

In addition to the benefits of an integrated payment processor, InstaMed also enables Canopy Partners and its clients to be more automated and schedule recurring payments, allowing staff to collect patient payment information securely upfront and process the payments automatically each time a payment is owed. The InstaMed Payment Plans solution also automatically sends patients emails prior to each payment, so Canopy Partners can ensure they set clear expectations with patients and collect payments without using any additional staff time to make phone calls.

With the InstaMed Patient Portal, patients can not only go online to pay as soon as they receive their statements, they can also sign up to receive eStatements and set up recurring payments, which eliminates administrative time and costs to collect in the back office. In addition, Canopy Partners has access to all statements, so when patients call with questions regarding their statements, staff can access them and address the inquiry.

**Canopy Partners Case Study (continued)**

**More than Just a Spreadsheet and Fee Schedule to Estimate Patient Responsibility**

To set payment expectations with patients ahead of time, Canopy Partners began calculating an estimate for patients prior to visits. However, this process was entirely manual: staff would call payers or visit websites to check eligibility and then manually calculate the estimated patient responsibility using a spreadsheet. This process added hours of work each week for the front office staff. Additionally, staff did not have a formal way to communicate the estimate to the patient.

Canopy Partners enabled one of its clients to automate the patient estimation process for its imaging centers with InstaMed's Eligibility and Estimator solutions. The imaging centers implemented its estimation process by pre-loading fee schedules into InstaMed Online and began to operate the estimation process as follows:

1. Verify patient eligibility prior to patient visits.
2. Create an estimate for patient responsibility in a matter of clicks based on the eligibility information and fee schedules.
3. Automatically generate a letter to use prior to and during patient visits to formally communicate payment expectations.
4. Inform patients of their payment options, including the option to save a payment card on file to collect the amount owed after the claim is adjudicated.

As with all estimates, the timing of claims and the level of benefit information received from insurance companies can differ, especially with more complex procedures. InstaMed works with payers to get the most accurate information in real-time to help with the accuracy of estimations.

As a result, Canopy Partners and its clients are setting payment expectations with patients upfront and offering patient-friendly payment options, which has equipped them to collect more payments from patients. By automating eligibility, estimation and payment collection processes under one vendor, Canopy Partners has reduced the administrative time required to collect the increasing patient payment responsibility by an estimated 25%, and patients have a smoother payment experience.

*InstaMed gave us the tools to verify eligibility and estimate patient responsibility before self-pay patient visits and automatically generate a communication to set clear payment expectations with the patients upfront.*

- Gina Oates,  
 Project Administrator,  
 Canopy Partners