

R1 Delivers in a Time of Crisis

How R1 RCM Provided Crucial Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic



Solid Rock Family Medicine is a nurse practitioner-owned family practice located in Morganton, North Carolina. Solid Rock contracts with Raleigh-Durham Medical Group (RDMG) to deliver healthcare to their community. They receive comprehensive revenue cycle and practice management services from R1 RCM (R1) through their affiliation with RDMG.



Physician practices have plenty of challenges in normal times. But, what is the plan of action during an unprecedented pandemic? How does an independent practice survive such an event? The key is tapping into the comprehensive services of a business partner well equipped to provide critical support.

An Unprecedented Pandemic Strikes

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, R1 quickly and proactively provided Solid Rock with direction for infection control. “The seriousness of the virus, plus the need for compliance due to an upcoming CMS site visit, meant we needed to be extremely proactive with infection control protocols” says Lynn Guarrant, Director of Quality services for R1. R1 also provided clinical guidance for triaging and separating patients to prevent community spread. With R1’s support, Solid Rock was able to react much more rapidly than other practices in the area.

The need for telehealth was quickly apparent. From start to finish, Solid Rock’s telehealth capability was up and running within one week. R1 helped to source the most appropriate HIPPA-compliant application as well as educate the staff on billing practices. The electronic medical record system was updated with templates for audio and audio-visual visits with corresponding CPT codes.

At the height of the pandemic, 47% of patients were seen via telehealth. One provider who was considered high-risk was able to complete 100% of patient visits utilizing telemedicine technology. **Telehealth capabilities allowed the practice to see the same number of patients during the pandemic while maintaining a strong average charge of \$324.**

R1 also worked to source critical PPE supplies through RDMG’s relationships with ACOs and vendors throughout the country.

THE CHALLENGE

The COVID-19 crisis presented many challenges: patient and staff safety, patient care and financial viability among them.

THE SOLUTION

R1 quickly provided critical support during this very difficult time:

- Clinical guidance including infection control protocols
- Telehealth
 - Coding Education
 - Quality services
 - Appointment management
- IT Services
- Revenue integrity
- Chronic care management
- Provider credentialing

THE RESULTS

- ✓ Financial performance remained strong
- ✓ Telehealth successfully implemented with proper coding protocols
 - › 47% of patient visits transitioned to telehealth
 - › Average charge of \$324
- ✓ Chronic care management program expanded
- ✓ Increased patient care during unprecedented circumstances
- ✓ No staff furloughs

Much like other practices, Solid Rock faced the possibility of furloughing staff during this very challenging period. However, in collaboration with R1, they developed a plan to increase chronic care management services for their patients. "This was clearly a need since patients with two or more chronic conditions are at high risk," says Lynn. Protocols were developed for patient outreach to ensure wellness and implement care plans appropriately. "Developing this program created incremental revenue streams which allowed Solid Rock to avoid the staff furloughs that other practices experienced."

Solid Rock Fares Well in the Storm

"I really can't thank R1 enough for the fantastic support we received during the COVID-19 crisis" says Cindy Biddix, Practice Manager at Solid Rock. "I don't know where we would be right now without all of R1's help."

Solid Rock was able to maintain a strong financial position due to their swift transition to telehealth. "North Carolina was quick to allow full reimbursement for telehealth. **With R1's guidance for telehealth and billing, our financial position really didn't change at all during this time.**" Expenses were well controlled since we were using fewer medical supplies due to the lower volume of office visits" says Cindy.

Patient care remained strong too. In April, Solid Rock provided chronic care management to 149 patients and generated \$19,091 in additional revenue. "At first, patients were hesitant to enroll in the chronic care management program; now they are eager to participate" says Cindy. "People are afraid of the virus; now we have a program where patients feel well cared for. And we didn't have to furlough staff after all – a win-win."

"I so appreciate R1's guidance, checking in with us and providing such great support during this stressful time," says Cindy. "Sometimes it takes a bad situation to shed light on the good things you have. This situation has reinforced what a treasure the R1 team really is. I'm very thankful for the leadership and guidance we receive from the R1 team."

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Cindy Biddix

Practice Manager, Solid Rock



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ARE THRIVING IN THE NEW
HEALTHCARE WORLD.
WE'RE HERE TO HELP.**



ABOUT R1 RCM

R1 RCM is a leading provider of technology-enabled RCM services which transform and solve revenue cycle performance challenges across hospitals, health systems and group physician practices. R1's proven and scalable operating models seamlessly complement a healthcare organization's infrastructure, quickly driving sustainable improvements to net patient revenue and cash flows while reducing operating costs and enhancing the patient experience.

Learn more at r1rcm.com or contact us contact@r1rcm.com.