

## CASE STUDY:

# Piedmont urgent care by Wellstreet

Fast-growth urgent care provider needs new patient payment process tailored to its unique challenges

## CHALLENGE

- **High-volume, multi-location urgent care group must reduce patient collection costs to compress payment timeline and optimize operational results— all while maintaining a superior patient experience.**

## SOLUTIONS

- **Leveraging Waystar Perform™, the team identified top revenue producing codes and implemented process improvements to reduce front-end errors**

## RESULTS

- **The practice reduced its charge lag and decreased the number of days from claims submission to payment.**

## The choice

An urgent care organization with 15 locations across the metro Atlanta area, Piedmont Urgent Care by WellStreet's 50 physicians and mid-level providers treat patients via more than 200,000 encounters each year. Launched in 2012, WellStreet has realized rapid growth, and its ability to expand with such success isn't only due to market demand. Driven by the leadership team, the organization strives for ongoing improvements in every aspect of the practice, including its patient payment process. Like most urgent care providers, many of WellStreet's patients are one-time visitors, so WellStreet must rely on efficiency and a positive patient experience to build loyalty

**“Anything less than a great experience can contribute to poor patient satisfaction and patients' unwillingness to pay, which in turn leads to higher AR days and increased bad debt,” says Chief Executive Officer, Dave Crussell.**

## Waystar solution

### Simplifying and unifying processes to achieve patient payment excellence

“Before For the first couple of years, WellStreet relied on manual, post-visit payment processes and paper statements. Then, the organization tried using a card-on-file solution, allowing front-office staff to store credit or debit cards at time of service and charge them after insurance had paid the claims, but they still had to manually set up these charges. Recognizing an opportunity to simplify and unify their processes even more, WellStreet implemented Waystar's Waystar Payments™ Greenlight™ feature to further automate the patient payment process, saving incremental amounts of time per patient to achieve more across their revenue cycle

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### Results

#### ***An inherently inefficient process becomes highly automated***

“Due to the reliance on third-party payers, any health-care organization’s patient payment process is inherently inefficient,” Crussell says. “You can either wait to send paper statements after insurance pays claims, or you can collect at time of service based on an estimate that must be later adjusted with statements or refunds. Neither option is ideal, so we decided to create a highly automated system—one that’s virtually no-touch by our staff.”

The new time of service process is faster and more simplified, allowing staff to quickly review estimates and take co-payments at their workstations. identify key stroke errors and adjustments to correct the intake process. “It’s often a matter of getting staff to slow down and remember to work more carefully,” says Beltran. “Showing them the data helps them see where they’re making mistakes, and how often.”

#### **Steps #2-7 are all automated without staff having to check-in or make manual updates.**

Virtually no-touch time-of-service process:

1. Staff obtains the patient’s agreement to put a card on file to be charged up to an agreed-upon amount.
2. Payment adjudication/payment received
3. Waystar Payments automatically receives the patient balance from WellStreet’s practice management system
4. Waystar Payments initiates a match to the patient’s Greenlight (approved card on file record)
5. An automated email is sent 3-5 days before the patient’s card is processed to let them know the amount they’ll be charged
6. The card is automatically charged for their balance, and patients receive a receipt for the charge
7. If their visit costs less than the authorized amount, they are only charged the amount of the visit; in most cases, this concludes the payment process

If patients need a payment plan to pay any additional balance, WellStreet works with them to set up an agreeable plan, and then the no-touch process kicks-in again. Waystar Payments generates e-mails reminding patients of their upcoming credit card charge at the agreed upon due dates.

Crussell reiterates that this “no-touch” system isn’t necessarily impersonal. In fact, it’s just the opposite. The post-service communication generated by Waystar Payments gives patients many payment options they’re accustomed to using, and they appreciate the convenience and user-friendliness.

### Impact

#### ***Front office provides top-ranked service to collect more with less stress***

“As an urgent care organization, we must differentiate ourselves through quick, efficient registration and excellent customer service. At the same time, the staff must be able to secure payment. It’s a challenging balancing act to achieve both, and it requires the right processes, the right people and the right technology,” says Crussell.

With Waystar, supporting their processes and helping them achieve greater efficiency, WellStreet has sustained excellent patient satisfaction scores.

**“Our Net Promoter scores are among the highest in the industry,” Crussell says. “And our front-office staff are consistently able to collect at time-of-service.”**

Crussell notes that while it’s easy to collect payments with the Waystar solution, WellStreet also focuses on training staff, so they can quickly and effectively explain their process.

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“If a team member has patients who leave without being seen because they don’t want to put a credit card on file, we know that person needs more training on how to have confident conversations with the patient.”

Just-in-time revenue cycle facilitates 75% reduction in bad debt. With the new patient payments process, WellStreet has reduced its bad debt rate from around eight percent to just two percent. Even with their focus on collecting payments, WellStreet’s front-office staff has reduced the time-of-service payment process by four minutes per patient.

Crussell plans to keep fine-tuning WellStreet’s patient payment system until it’s even more tailored and automated to each patient’s experience. Additionally, his goal is to further reduce WellStreet’s bad debt from two percent to less than one percent.

“Waystar has made customizations to meet our unique needs as an urgent care provider,” says Crussell. “They’ve been a great strategic partner, and they’re committed to helping us achieve our vision.”

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### ABOUT WAYSTAR

*Waystar simplifies and unifies the healthcare revenue cycle with innovative, cloud-based technology. Together, our technology, data and client support streamline workflows and improve financials for our clients, so they can focus on their patients.*