



Columbus Therapy Associates

Improved consistency, compliance, and overall productivity with the new web-based MediLinks.

At Columbus Therapy Associates (CTA) in Columbus, OH, managing multiple funding sources and the required documentation for each was a time-consuming process that often resulted in gaps that needed completing. The group, which provides speech-language and occupational therapy services primarily for pediatric clients, used Microsoft Word templates for most of its documentation and billing but knew that a more streamlined process was necessary for consistency and compliance.

Because CTA had already been using a Mediware appointment scheduling solution, Office Manager Jillian Monahan says MediLinks was a natural addition. Co-owner Jody Cane, MA CCC-SLP, who handles billing, agrees: "Overall, we're very, very happy. MediLinks has streamlined our billing, scheduling, and our ability to stay in contact with families because their information is right there in front of our faces. It's been such a great thing for our company!"

Since going live with the software in June 2016, CTA has seen a dramatic improvement in its processes. With MediLinks, the company has:

- Improved scheduling and reduced no-shows
- Achieved better quality documentation in less time
- Improved practice management
- Streamlined billing

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Co-owner

MediLinks manages referrals and authorizations and speeds billing processes.

Full schedules

With MediLinks, the CTA team now has a better handle on authorizations, which helps clients as well. Rather than suddenly realizing they've run out of covered visits and, many times, stopping treatment, families have more notice to plan for self-pay and/or adjust their treatment schedules as needed.

In addition, MediLinks has provided CTA staff with much better visibility of cancellations and no-shows, prompting them to counsel with families to improve attendance early on. This allows CTA to keep its schedules filled with clients.

"We use our appointment activity reports to track attendance, and with the addition of MediLinks, it's been a lot easier to do this," Monahan says. "Our clinic has an 80 percent attendance policy, so [clients] have to attend 80 percent of sessions over a three-month period. It's helped us be able to contact the families and give them warnings."

Better documentation in less time

In addition to appointments at its clinic, the practice's 15 therapists see clients in homes, at schools, and in libraries, for a total of approximately 150 appointments each week. As a result, the ability for staff members to access MediLinks from anywhere has made a big difference in streamlining documentation.

Prior to MediLinks, CTA used ShareFile to store its documents online. However, for security, off-site therapists had to go to the clinic to review documents or treatment reports, which often wasn't feasible.

Cane adds that most therapists are now documenting in real time while they are with clients rather than jotting notes by hand and writing the reports later, which typically required about 90 minutes to complete. With MediLinks, however, the report time is cut almost in half. "Now," Cane says, "therapists have more time to plan for their clients, consult with families, and complete make-up treatment sessions."

Consistency in reports has also been a huge benefit. Although each of CTA's funding sources requires specific documentation, MediLinks' templates enable therapists to easily provide the information in the payer's preferred format.

"Before, there were so many options for how reports could be written, and things were often missing," explains Monahan. "We had different templates for our funding sources, so trying to meet all their different needs in one report took a lot of collaboration, but it has been really helpful."

Improved practice management

MediLinks has enabled the practice to better monitor key performance indicators, including attendance, monthly stats, copays, and billing data. With this information, CTA can monitor trends and implement change as needed.

For therapists, the notifications are especially helpful. "They like the ease of access for the interrupted charting, so they can just click right in and go back," reports Monahan. She adds that plan-of-care notifications help her keep track and follow up with referral sources.

Streamlined billing

Although CTA uses an outside billing agency, Cane says that preparing details for the agency is much easier now. Whereas billing for sessions could have taken up to three weeks, most are now billed within 24 to 48 hours. And because she can easily reference documentation when billing questions arise, Cane says she can usually clear up any errors the same day they are discovered.

In addition, copay information is right at hand, so collecting balances when patients check in is easy. Previously, CTA tracked patient balances in an Excel spreadsheet.

Altogether, these enhancements help Columbus Therapy Associates achieve its main goal of providing "quality, comprehensive intervention for clients and their families while creating a positive environment to foster learning and independence."

Founded in 2010, Columbus Therapy Associates (CTA) provides speech-language and occupational therapy services for children of all ages in Columbus, Ohio, and surrounding areas. In addition to its private therapy clinic, CTA provides services at clients' homes and at local charter and private schools.

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