



Making Data Accessible and Accurate: WellPoint's Automated Data Integration

“We want credentialing to be as seamless and happen as much behind the scenes as possible.”

— Amy Niehaus,
Director of Credentialing Technologies and
Internal/External Relations, WellPoint

Challenge

Make UCD data available for use by all appropriate internal departments without having to re-enter the information by hand into different systems.

Best Practice Solution

Build a two-phase, interface-plus-repository, bridge system that offers access flexibility and control over UCD credentialing data.

Summary

More than 200,000 WellPoint providers submit data through the UCD service. The health plan needed a way to automatically integrate the UCD data into systems throughout the organization. By doing so, it could reduce the errors and duplication caused by manual entry. WellPoint's solution was to build an electronic “bridge” between UCD and VisualCACTUS, a specialized software package it uses for credentialing and provider management. The organization developed a two-phase approach called C2C—CAQH to CACTUS—consisting of a data repository and an interface with its credentialing database. C2C made the provider data used for credentialing easily available for provider directories, reports and pharmacy programs.

From idea to implementation, several internal challenges had to be solved, including validation and timing. Externally, WellPoint had to fix discrepancies in state and CAQH application mapping, the problem of multiple addresses for schools and hospitals and the dates on custom extracts. By eliminating these issues one by one, C2C has enhanced the value of the UCD data and is helping WellPoint explore further efficiencies.

Results

Expected reduction in application and data entry costs of approximately 20%.

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Include image scanning in your automation plan—it's the future.
- ▶ Do validation and primary source verification as UCD data is taken in.
- ▶ Make the interface mirror existing systems
 - Mirror manual data entry process as much as possible in automation.
 - Base solution on software used by entire organization.
- ▶ Set up controls over UCD data
 - Automatic notifications about discrepancies and problems sent by e-mail.
 - Create automated reports to alert users to changed data, urgent updating needs and initial applicants.
- ▶ Watch for these trouble spots in automation: Provider use of upper case, “none,” discrepancies in hospital and school addresses.