The
state of collection
a state collection service, inc. newsletter

in this issue

where we'll be

Region 5 Dixie Institute
Tampa, FL, February 25-28, 2018

2018 HFMA Annual Conference
Las Vegas, NV, June 25-28, 2018

locations

Madison
Beloit
Milwaukee
Chicago

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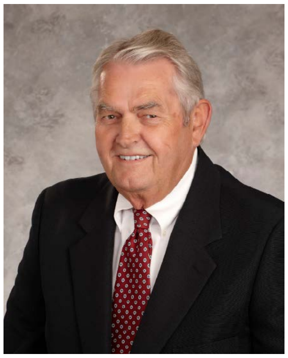
tom haag, ceo

challenge accepted



As I sit here trying to come up with some thought-provoking words to say about "accepting the challenge", it occurs to me that in our industry, this is just something we do every day without giving it a second thought.

Specifically within our own company, one example of this would be in our hiring process – when we interview folks for a position, we challenge them to convince us they have the necessary skill-set to work here. When we visit with prospective clients, our challenge is to convince them that we completely understand their expectations and intend to uphold those expectations to their fullest. And once they've become clients, we do so having accepted the challenge of ensuring they are completely satisfied with the work we're doing for them day in and day out.

To grow in our company, employees must demonstrate that they understand and accept the challenge of performing at a level that will produce positive results for our clients. We must continue to train and educate our employees so that they too can pass along their knowledge, thus growing us all as a company. The articles in this issue will demonstrate the various ways we at State are "accepting the challenge" and what steps we're taking to ensure our challenges are being answered.

terry armstrong, president

accepting the challenge

How appropriate to be talking about 'accepting the challenge' as we are all tuning in to watch the Winter Olympics unfold. While it may seem strange that we would dare compare ourselves to Olympic athletes, we do strive to be the very best in our industry and in order to do that, we invest in the latest equipment, processes, and methods. And we train…to be THE BEST.

Healthcare today is ever-changing. New government regulations, consolidations of healthcare organizations, insurance companies merging with drug companies. And, of course, the new venture between Berkshire, Amazon, and JP Morgan, who plan to set up a new healthcare company that will provide services to their employees as a means of minimizing the growing costs of healthcare. If successful, they plan to expand beyond their employee base, which is intriguing and could certainly disrupt our current healthcare system. To thrive in this environment, it might be better to accept the challenges that such changes bring and view them as opportunities instead of obstacles and problems.

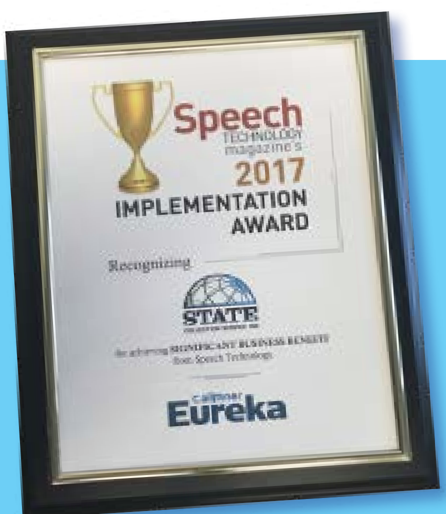
At State, we strive to understand these challenges and provide solutions to our clients as it relates to their revenue cycle. In this issue, we touch on just a few of ways we are doing this. With employee training being so critical, Brandi Rudd talks about her new role in Patient Engagement and highlights why we use HFMA's Certified Revenue Cycle Representative (CRCR) program. Brandi also explains how we train staff for leadership roles with our Future Leaders Program.

But before we can even begin to train our employees properly, we need to understand the core-base of employees we're hiring and working to retain. Millennials are a key generation now and provide a new challenge in recruiting and retention. Judy Gray discusses how we accept that challenge.

As the millennial generation also becomes a larger part of the patient demographic, we know that the way they pay bills is different than previous generations. Certainly, they want more mobile-friendly access to their accounts and user-friendly payment portals. In his article, Pat Maurer discusses how his company, Apex, offers many avenues for payment to meet the needs of all generations of patients.

Finally, by sharing the news of our recent renovation and move to a new office in Beloit, Wisconsin, Tim Haag discusses how we are working to keep up with the growing need for employees. Our Beloit call center is one of our four locations and houses a state-of-the-art call center that will house about 500 people.

With the right work environment, the right people, the right equipment, and our desire to be the very best for our clients, we look forward to accepting any challenges 2018 may bring!



State Collection Service was once again honored with Speech Technology Magazine's Implementation Award for our 2017 deployment of EurekaLIVE! Our enhanced speech analytics technology now allows representative conversations to unfold in text format within 3-5 seconds of the words being spoken. The text triggers fly-outs to the representative based on in-built alert language to guide the agent through the call. Increased script and call guideline adherence, reduced training time, and service recovery are all results of our implementation of EurekaLIVE.

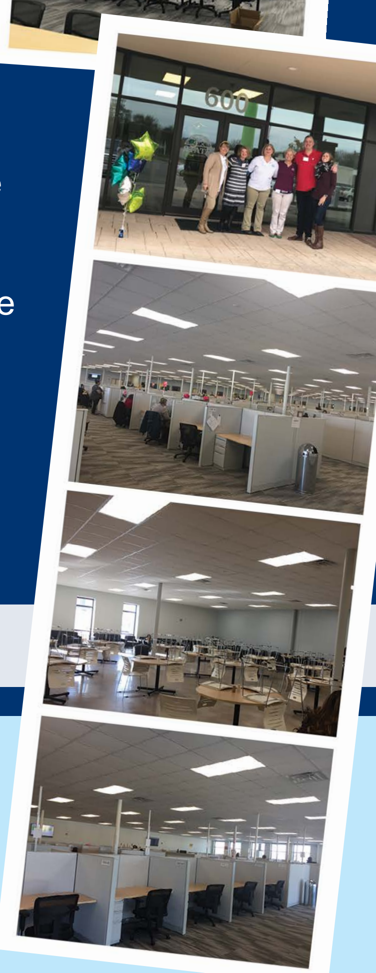
Congratulations!

tim haag, vice president of support services

here we GROW again -
expanding in beloit

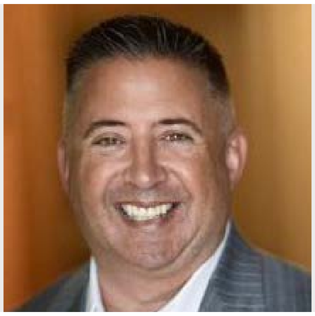
I am extremely excited to share the recent expansion and move of our Beloit, Wisconsin call center. Thanks to remarkable growth in recent years, this is State Collection Service's third expansion in Beloit in less than five years. Our new office, located within what was previously a Sears department store, is over 42,000 square feet and has the capacity to house over 500 team members.

In designing the new space, we spent a considerable amount of time focusing on an even stronger security infrastructure as well as more widely displaying our technology offerings including real-time speech analytics through EurekaLIVE and gamification with FidoTrack. Based on a much more open floor plan than our previous location, this new space allows for expanded team collaboration while providing easy views of the large call center floors from any area in the space. We additionally focused on more employee-centric needs including a very large dining area, cell phone lockers away from the call center floors, a private mother's area, and a VIP room designed as a private space for our highest-performing representatives.



The growth we have experienced over the last decade has been instrumental in our continued expansion within the Beloit community. We are excited to continue serving our clients from this new space!

pat maurer, president, apex revenue technologies



"i am more than my balance"

how understanding patient needs, behaviors and tendencies can deliver a more personalized patient experience – and a better financial result

Patients are now responsible for a higher percentage of their balances than ever before. In fact, in a recent study, people paid more than $420 billion out of pocket. For a variety of reasons – including financial hardships or even confusion – more than 15 percent of that went uncollected. For providers, the cost to collect patient balances continues to rise.

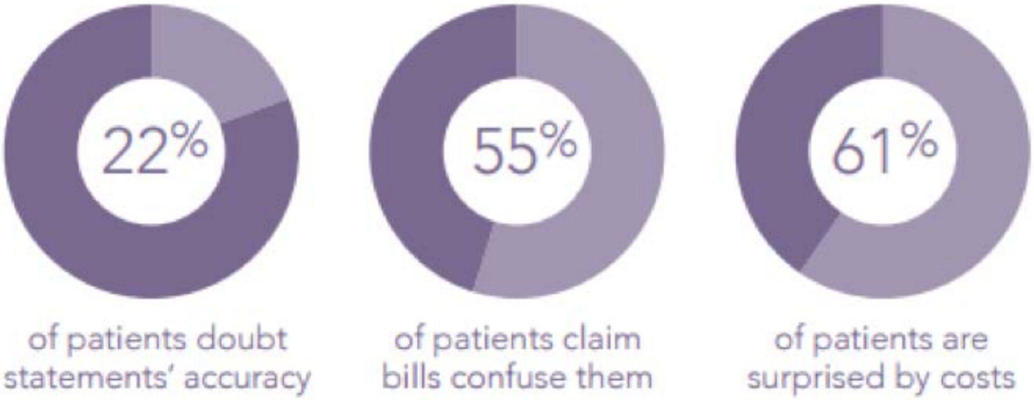
As a result, it is more critical than ever for healthcare providers to balance patient needs with financial performance. To do this, they must engage with their patients in new ways to create an emotional connection, express empathy and drive patient engagement. It is also important to be reminded that patient communication needs and expectations shift, so providers must rise to meet those expectations, particularly when it comes to the often-challenging patient billing process. So what has changed?

For starters, new technology has altered the approach for most of the population (particularly the younger segments). With new digital technology, smart phones, social media, etc., there are countless ways for companies to get their message out - and do so in real time. People also want everything personalized, relevant and tailored for them as individuals.. Patients are driving this change faster and more broadly.

As a result of these shifting expectations, sound patient insights are more critical than ever before. Once providers know more about their patients, they can determine the best ways to connect and engage with them, cultivating a relationship that can improve revenue cycle results. The healthcare industry has been focused on financial results and the patient experience, but it's not clear in many cases how those ideas merge. Providers have an opportunity to focus on understanding patients and how they pay to drive better results.

REVENUE CYCLE CHALLENGES ARE REAL AND GROWING

There has never been such dramatic change as it relates to the patient financial experience. Today, out of pocket expenses for patients can be substantial – with deductibles averaging $2,000 or more – and that creates pressure on the healthcare organization and on patients.



Despite positive steps to make statements more clear, concise, correct and easier to act on, patients by and large are still confused. Confusion leads to dissatisfaction and that dissatisfaction erodes the relationship providers have with their patients.

UNDERSTANDING PATIENTS AS INDIVIDUALS

There are ways in which providers can ease the burden of this experience by better matching financial communications and payment options to payment needs – not only for better financial results, but to better align to the needs of the patient in a more proactive and compassionate way. We know that patients want to pay their bills. If we can help patients find solutions in a way that fits their needs, that is to everyone's benefit.

continued from page 4

Think of it this way: if a physician only knew one or two things about his or her patient, could they provide a sound diagnosis? Of course not. Without the right data, it's difficult to understand the needs of the patient and how to care for them. So shouldn't our approach to communicating with patients be just as thorough? The fact is that most providers are still applying static financial communications to a diverse patient population.

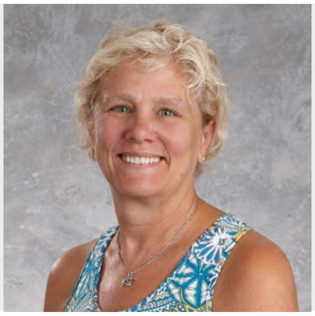
The good news is that every patient interaction generates actionable data and an opportunity to gather even more. That data can and should change the way providers transform their financial communication. Providers have access to this data through various touchpoints with the patient from appointment scheduling to initial paperwork to conversations at the front desk or via follow-up consultations.

The data helps providers segment patients along multiple dimensions that tend to drive payment behavior and financial needs. But gathering the data is just the start – it's critical that providers pull all of this information together, ideally managed through a dynamic, automated, analytics engine, to help build an understanding of each patient and their unique personal and financial profile at every touch point. This superbly informed and targeted approach will engage patients at a highly personal level that influences behaviors around the billing process and enables consistent communication across the revenue cycle – from the first billing-related message they receive, to a "past-due balance" note that includes a payment plan option, to confirmation of payment received and other points in between and beyond.

Some patients may prefer to be reached via text or email. Some are using the patient portal to interact. Others want to set up payment plans delivered in paper form. No matter the way, they are being treated as individuals – not an account number – which will increase engagement, trust and loyalty and improve results for all involved.

ANALYZE AND OPTIMIZE TO ENSURE A BETTER APPROACH
As competition in the healthcare space intensifies, communication can become the great equalizer. Transparency and trust are essential. And simplicity is king. A successful targeted communications model also incorporates the voice of the patient, so providers should continuously ask how they are doing – not only about their patients' experience, but also about their preferences. Once initiated, providers should look for patterns in data that indicate areas of change, in order to improve the experience and fit the payment to the patient.

judy gray, chief human resources officer



accepting the challenge
of hiring and retaining millennials

What a difference a few years makes. After enduring one of the longest and deepest recessions in modern times, we are now faced with the tightest labor market in recent memory. Unemployment is statistically at zero percent and we are always recruiting candidates who are actively employed but looking for better opportunities.

Enter the Millennial generation. By 2020, over 75 percent of the workforce will be made up of Millennials. This is a generation that has been raised with technology, choices, and a desire to make a difference in the world. The challenge of attracting and retaining Millennials requires a wholesale change in the way we organize work, write policies, and manage people.

Our Millennials at State Collection Service have challenged us to be better managers, corporate citizens, and partners to our clients and their patients. Their influence has helped us reevaluate our people practices to more appropriately meet the needs of this growing age cohort. We have adopted flexible scheduling and alternative working arrangements to afford our employees the ability to achieve the desire for work/life balance. We've also increased our philanthropic footprint, continuing to engage in active giving as well as financial support within our communities. We enjoy positive productive relationships with each other, we collaborate regularly, and we have fun at work.

At State Collection Service, we know how important hiring and retaining the right people is. While the current labor market may be tougher than in the past, we are certainly up to the challenge of attracting and retaining Millennials as we continue to honor our history of service to our clients and their patients.

brandi rudd, director of patient engagement

accepting the challenge of learning
interviews with our reps

As State Collection Service continues to grow, we know that one way to ensure a competitive advantage is by investing in training, technology, and the customer service we offer our clients and their patients. In July of 2017, Brandi Rudd moved from her position as Director of Extended Business Office to Director of Patient Engagement, a new position for State Collection Service. In this new role, Brandi oversees training and speech analytics, and is responsible for our overall approach to ensuring a positive patient experience.

Accepting the challenge of "learning" – embracing HFMA's CRCR designation
An interview with Jessica Kronschnabel, Extended Business Office Team Lead

Employees within our Extended Business Office (EBO) have an opportunity to receive nationally recognized professional certification through HFMA's Certified Revenue Cycle Representative (CRCR) program. This program provides our staff with knowledge of the entire revenue cycle and empowers them to be solution-providers by giving them the tools they need to handle a variety of patient questions and concerns that may come up on a daily basis. I recently interviewed EBO Team Lead, Jessica Kronschnabel, to find out how the CRCR certification has helped her in her role here at State Collection Service.

Brandi: What is your overall impression of the CRCR certification?
Jessica: Taking the class was a big eye opener to the whole process, from when you walk in the door, to how claims are generated, to the insurance processing, to the bill process and collections. The class goes into each step deeper than what I had expected. This has helped deescalate calls as I have a better understanding of the process to then be able to explain it to patients.

"I have a better understanding of the process to then be able to explain it to patients."

Brandi: What are a few things you've learned through CRCR that you didn't know before?"
Jessica: I learned new and helpful information regarding Medicare A, including a benefit period that resets after 60 days of being hospital free. I received more in-depth knowledge about the ABN, and I have used this information when speaking to patients to explain in more detail why balances are not covered under this.

Brandi: What additional feedback can you provide about the CRCR certification?
Jessica: Overall, it is a much more detail-oriented class that puts the puzzle pieces together. When I started at State I did not know much medical terminology, even coinsurance and deductible. As you start to familiarize yourself with the business you pick up on bits and pieces, but taking this class puts all the bits and pieces together in a whole new way, making it much more understandable. Having a stronger understanding of the revenue cycle allows me to help patients more easily understand the process.

Accepting the challenge of “planning for the future” – How our Future Leaders program benefits our staff
An interview with Amanda Carter, Extended Business Office Supervisor

State Collection Service’s Future Leaders program is designed for high potential employees who have demonstrated leadership aptitude and a sincere desire to pursue management as a career. The purpose of the program is to provide the participants with a series of training sessions, discussion groups, and assignments that will prepare them for leadership roles within the company. We are very proud of this program and the over 70% of the participants who have been promoted because of it. I recently interviewed EBO Supervisor, Amanda Carter, to see how the program has benefited her.

Brandi: What was one of the reasons you enjoyed the Future Leaders Program so much?
Amanda: Aside from the team building, one of the many reasons I enjoyed the program is the book we were given, The Leadership Challenge. Through the program and book, I discovered the ‘real leader’ in me, which at times was not easy, because I thought I had always known my ‘role’. This program helped me realize I had so much more to offer.

“I discovered the ‘real leader’ in me, which at times was not easy, because I thought I had always known my ‘role’. This program helped me realize I had so much more to offer.”

Brandi: How has the program benefited you here with your career at State Collection Service?
Amanda: From the very first day of the program, I enjoyed every session from start to finish, which has transformed me and has helped pave my way. Since graduating from the program in early 2015, I have been promoted three times. I was promoted to Universal Representative in June 2015, EBO Statement Specialist in October 2015, and EBO Supervisor in April 2017.

Brandi: What would you say to others who may be considering applying for the Future Leader program?
Amanda: The first time I applied for the program, I wasn’t chosen. I was very disappointed, but I applied for the next session and was accepted! I strongly urge anyone who is considering leadership within our company to give the program a try. Who knows, you may discover something new about yourself through the process.

congrats future leaders!

State Collection Service is proud to announce the recent graduation of our latest group of Future Leaders!

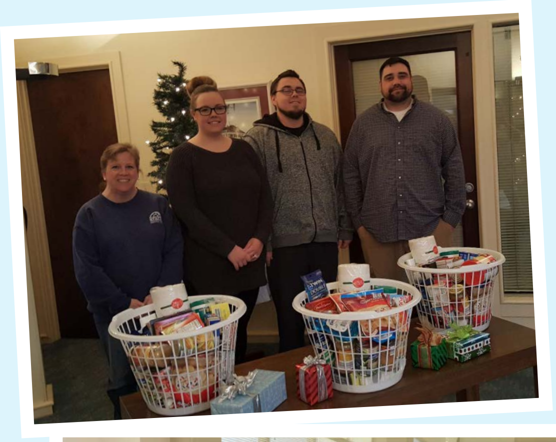
Our Future Leaders program is a six-month course that brings together current employees from various area of the company through an application and interview process. The program consists of specialized training, discussion, and hands-on exploration of various leadership topics, providing the group the skills needed to become a successful leader within State Collection Service.

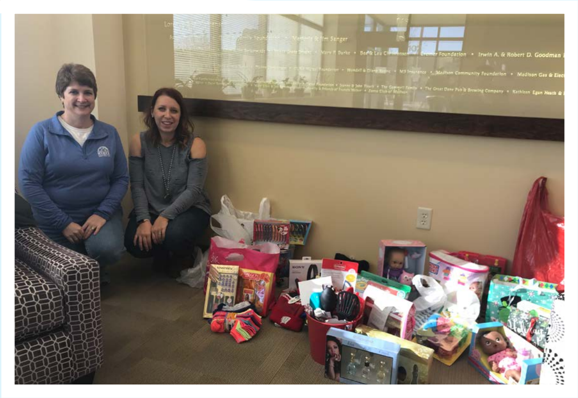
Through our Future Leaders program we have been able to promote 70%% of these valued graduates, and our newest group of Future Leaders are already hard at work in the program. We can wait to see what lies ahead for these and all future, Future Leaders.

Congratulations to our newest Future Leaders graduates - we’re all very proud of your accomplishments!

A huge THANK YOU to Future Leader, Juan Rios (pictured front row, right) for making such an amazing cake!

STATE'S CONTINUED CHARITABLE GIVING

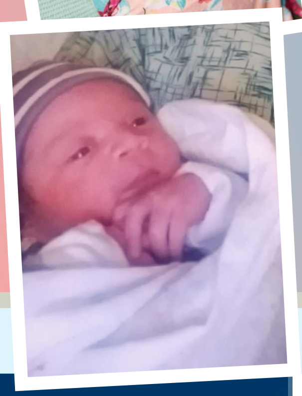




Once again our four locations flexed their generous muscles and helped support area adopt-a-family and supply donation centers during this past holiday season. In Chicago, employees worked to provide a full holiday meal, along with personal hygiene items, and cleaning supplies for three different families, through the help of Tri-City Family Services. The Madison office again chose to raise funds and items for DAIS (Domestic Abuse Intervention Services) to buy all holiday gifts for a family of five as well as make a $350 donation to put towards the DAIS Christmas morning holiday breakfast for all residents and their families. Our other offices are trying something new this year, rather than raising funds for supplies and donations during the holidays, they have opted to fund-raise now, when the need for help is sometimes over-looked.

The fundraising continues! We are currently working, as a company, to again raise funds for the Polar Plunge, a benefit support The Special Olympics. State Collection Service has taken part in this event for six year now and is a corporate sponsor of the amazing (and chilly!) event! The Polar Plunge is Saturday, February 17th, if you'd like to support our fabulous team of jumpers and dontate to this amazing cause, please follow this link: **DONATE TO STATE'S POLAR PLUNGE TEAM**.

We couldn't be more proud of the support our employees provide to families in our own communities and can't say 'Thank You' enough! To our employees, the generosity and continued support of our local charities that you show, is awe-inspiring and exemplifies the vision we have for State Collection Service, to be a strong partner in our communities.



Oh Baby!

Congratulations to Kathryn Murphy, Dmonique Isham, and Heidi Martinez on the recent births of their children!

Eliana Rhondalee (top left), daugher of Kathryn, arrived October 29th, weighing 7lbs 11oz, 19.5 inches long.

Ladell Crenshaw (bottom left), son of Dmonique, arrived recently.

Ella Roesle (right), daugher of Heidi, arrived December 4th, weighing 8 lbs 7 oz, 20.5 inches long.

Congrats Kathryn, Dmonique, and Heidi on your beautiful bundles of joy!