



How Willis-Knighton Health System's outpatient rehabilitation department **plans for growth using WellSky[®] Resource Manager**



About Willis-Knighton Health System

Willis-Knighton Health System is in Shreveport, Louisiana. Originally founded in 1924, the organization has grown from one small hospital to multiple facilities and offers services that span the entire continuum of care, including outpatient rehabilitation. Willis-Knighton offers the full continuum of rehabilitation services, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, counseling, and case management. All of their locations are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Quick facts:

WellSky Solutions in use: WellSky Rehabilitation and WellSky Resource Manager

Number of facilities: 4 acute care hospitals, 1 inpatient rehabilitation unit, 4 outpatient clinics

Number of therapists: 72 full-time, part-time, and PRN staff

WellSky client since: 2011

The trouble with retrospective analysis of scheduling data

To be successful, outpatient rehabilitation organizations must maximize capacity. This makes staff and clinician productivity and efficiency essential. To maximize productivity and efficiency, rehabilitation directors often set and monitor goals. Today, many rehabilitation organizations monitor these goals by manually exporting retrospective data from various systems.

The leadership team at Willis-Knighton Health System monitors several metrics to ensure patients are seen in a timely fashion and to ensure performance metrics are maintained. These metrics include the number of evaluations made by each clinician, the number of treatments completed, and each clinician's no-show and cancellation rate. The team at Willis-Knighton Health System use this data to make staffing decisions at each clinic. When asked about the process in use at Willis-Knighton, Lee Rielly, PT, PhD., Assistant Director of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R) explained the process as, "extremely cumbersome." That was because data was living in disparate systems.

Dr. Rielly described this cumbersome process in depth. First, he would pull a report from the timecard manager to have an accurate account of the hours his clinicians worked each month. Next, he would download information from their scheduling solution to determine the amount of time each clinician was scheduled to work, the number of appointments they were scheduled to see, and the number of appointments that were completed during the month. Finally, Dr. Rielly would manually enter this data into a spreadsheet, create a series of pivot tables, and share results with each clinic manager. This process would take Dr. Rielly nearly an entire day to complete.

When asked about some of the difficulties of this process, Dr. Rielly explained that the team was always looking at data retrospectively. Leadership was always looking at what the team had done, as opposed to looking into the future to identify any potential scheduling challenges or opportunities for improvement in the months or weeks ahead. Trends from this manual analysis revealed the organization was not progressing towards its service delivery objectives and productivity goals. This led the leadership team at Willis-Knighton Health System to search for a new way to improve the efficiency in their outpatient clinics.

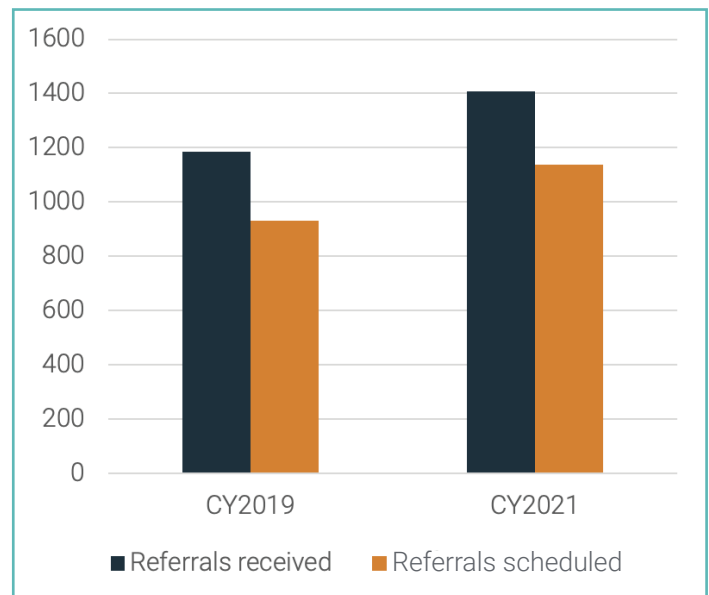
Using real-time data has helped improve processes and create greater efficiency

In October of 2020, Willis-Knighton Health System added WellSky Resource Manager to their existing suite of WellSky solutions to improve manual processes and operations. To do this, the outpatient department at Willis-Knighton Health System has made two major process changes.

Process change 1: Collaborative patient scheduling

The first process change focuses on patient scheduling. At Willis-Knighton Health System, reimbursement specialists schedule all outpatient rehabilitation appointments. Each of the four outpatient clinics has dedicated reimbursement

specialists. Historically, these specialists worked in silos and would schedule every referral that came off their fax machine to their clinic. Dr. Rielly explained that: "The team was so focused on working in their silos and they were not seeing that their individual clinic was, in fact, part of a larger system of clinics." This process caused delays in scheduling initial patient visits and created wait lists.



The data above illustrates how collaborative scheduling improved the visit completion rate at one of Willis-Knighton's outpatient clinics. The data compares referrals received vs. referrals scheduled from 2019 and 2021. Referral volume represented in these graphs is from the first two quarters of the calendar year. Process changes enabled the team to **increase referrals by 19%**.

Dr. Rielly noticed this problem and used WellSky Resource Manager to institute a new process. Now, every week, the reimbursement specialists provide him with an assessment of how many referrals they receive. Together, using WellSky Resource Manager, they look at their clinic availability and the availability of all the clinics across the health system. If the specialists cannot schedule their referrals at their clinic within a two-week window they shift them to the clinic with the the most availability.

When asked about how WellSky Resource Manager helped with this process, Dr. Rielly said, “WellSky Resource Manager has been very helpful in allowing me to manage the needs of our clinics. Now I can deliver referrals to clinics with more availability and proactively manage our waitlist.”

Process change 2: Efficient staff scheduling

The second process change focuses on staff scheduling. Before COVID, a therapist’s schedule would feature overlapping or double-booked appointments. The reimbursement specialists would schedule built-in paperwork time to help the clinicians’ complete evaluations and documentation. When asked about this tactic, Dr. Rielly noted that it was problematic. He explained, “The problem with our process was that if evaluations did not come in due to a cancellation or no-show, and the spot was not filled from the wait list, you would have paperwork time built into a schedule that already had plenty of time for paperwork. We had a lot of unused time.”

Today, the team at Willis-Knighton Health System is no longer scheduling paperwork time. Instead, the reimbursement specialists work to quickly schedule any cancellation or no-shows from the wait list. This process change has eliminated unused time for staff and has allowed the team at Willis-Knighton to run more efficiently. In addition, in response to the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the team is no longer double-booking patients or overlapping appointments. All care is delivered in 1:1 appointment blocks to promote social distancing and patient safety. Dr. Rielly explained that, “Today, even with the changes we have made to our scheduling paradigm, the team at Willis-Knighton can schedule 94% of the volume we completed in 2019.” More importantly, they can operate at this level of efficiency with fewer full-time employees.

Doing more with less

| | CY2019 | CY2021 | Percent change |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|----------------|
| Total staff | 17 | 16 | - 6% |
| Appointments scheduled | 8157 | 9353 | + 17% |
| Appointments completed | 6138 | 6655 | + 8% |
| Appointments completed per provider | 361 | 416 | + 15% |

The table above shows how greater visibility into staff and patient schedules at one Willis-Knighton facility allowed the team to improve scheduling efficiency. **Even with fewer full-time employees the team was able to increase the number of appointments completed by 8%.** Please note the table above compares data between 2019 and 2021. Data represents patient volume for the first two quarters of the calendar year.

Rather than reverting to pre-COVID processes, leadership at Willis-Knighton plans to keep their current processes in place. Moving forward, the team plans to add staff to increase capacity.

“WellSky Resource Manager is a tool that allows you to quickly assess the status of your current practice environment so you can make proactive decisions regarding resource allocation to meet your objectives.”

Dr. Lee Rielly, PT, Ph.D
Assistant Director of PM&R



Looking to the future: Using data to support growth

WellSky Resource Manager will be an important tool as Dr. Rielly looks to continue to improve efficiencies and increase capacity throughout the health system's outpatient clinics.

Dr. Rielly is already using the data within WellSky Resource Manager to support hiring decisions. Using information from WellSky Resource Manager, he was able to show administration that even though his teams are running as efficiently as possible, a wait list still exists. With this data, Dr. Rielly was able to get approval to hire contracted staff to help increase capacity until permanent, full-time staff are hired. According to Dr. Rielly, “If I didn't have the data [from WellSky Resource Manager], the argument for contracted staff would have been a lot harder to make.”

About WellSky®

WellSky Resource Manager uses data to help improve productivity at every level — from individual care teams to enterprise organizations. By leveraging both real-time and forecasted performance, and by utilizing integrated capacity metrics, care teams are enabled to meet productivity targets while ensuring visit compliance. Roll-up reporting enables organizations to understand the utilization of their productivity at a global level. When combined with actionable recommendations of WellSky Resource Manager, teams can build or adapt strategies that allow organizations to thrive.



Learn how WellSky® Resource Manager can **transform your organization**. Request a personalized demonstration today!

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