
North Valley Hospital

Whitefish, Montana

25 beds

7,646 ED visits

1,550 inpatient admissions

Impetus for Initiative: In response to patient requests, North Valley Hospital began providing basic pricing information in 2010 on common procedures, such as MRIs and CT scans. North Valley recently improved its price transparency capabilities by acquiring price estimator software. Now, patients can receive the estimated out-of-pocket cost for two dozen procedures. Requests for pricing information are received primarily through telephone and in-person inquiries, but the organization is upgrading its cost estimator to include a web-based feature.

North Valley is experiencing an uptick in pricing information requests, most likely due to the increasing number of patients with high-deductible health insurance plans. Additionally, the hospital finds itself serving a significant number of Canadian patients, many of whom are seeking elective procedures not covered by insurance.

While many of the employees in the Admissions and Patient Access departments are involved in providing patients with pricing information, North Valley has a core group of employees who have received specific training. This training includes HFMA price transparency and patient-friendly billing coursework. The communication includes educating patients so they know they are likely to receive other bills (radiology, anesthesiology, etc.).

Challenges: The hospital has experienced challenges in ensuring that the price estimator software pulls the correct data and that the various information systems and databases used to compile a price estimate all communicate appropriately. It is important that staff understand from which data the software is pulling.

Contact: Jason Spring, Chief Executive Officer

jspring@nvhosp.org

406-863-3500