# Billing efficiencies yield quick results

## At-a-glance

**Community**
- Behavioral Health

**Organization**
- WellPower

**Location**
- Denver, CO

**Challenges**
- Streamline billing and accounting functions

**Solution**
- myAvatar™

**Results**
- Processing for Medicaid billing reduced from one full day to one hour
- Automated posting for most payers
- Simplified multi-step billing process with role-based consoles

# Netsmart

## WellPower sees major time savings through complete billing automation

Since its founding in 1989, WellPower has been a driving force in behavioral healthcare innovation. The organization provides clinical services to more than 20,000 individuals each year. An additional 69,000 outreach services are provided to children, families and adults.

Since implementing the Netsmart myAvatar solution in July 2015, WellPower has been focused on leveraging the platform to enable significant time and financial savings. Through the use of Quick Billing, Scheduled Tasks and clearinghouse integration, along with other pivotal Netsmart billing enhancements, WellPower has been realizing that goal.

"The automation of billing and posting has changed our focus," Stephanie Orecchio, WellPower director of accounts receivable said. "Instead of hours spent on monotonous tasks, we are able to tackle projects and issues quickly and more efficiently. We were able to see an immediate increase in revenue due to this automation, since we are able to bill and post with consistency and the staff have the time to work denials."

Billing processes that are not automated and do not leverage technology can be time consuming and labor intensive, therefore WellPower saw value in a partnership with Netsmart, where billing automation and simplification would become reality.

> " After Quick Billing, it takes about an hour to run billing and upload it to the clearinghouse site. Quick Billing has saved us days of work."
>
> Stephanie Orecchio
> Director of Accounts Receivable

### Quick Billing

Prior to partnering with myAvatar, Mental Health Center of Denver was billing electronically; however, there was little to no automation within the process. The billing staff was manually uploading more than 200 claims files per week, and it was taking about half of a full-time employee each week to run their billing process.

When WellPower went live with myAvatar in 2015, they continued with the electronic claims process. They were able to automate the creation of their claim files. Although myAvatar was doing the bulk of the work on running each claim, it still took multiple manual steps from the billing specialist to create each file.

WellPower implemented a free Netsmart enhancement called Quick Billing designed to create billing batches, close charges and create claims and 837s, all in one streamlined process. Organizations can also schedule Quick Billing runs during non-business hours, freeing up the staff for accounts receivable (AR) management activities.

"Before Quick Billing, we billed Medicaid monthly because the process took a full day to run," Orecchio said. "We also billed our other payers bi-weekly because it took three days to run a full process. After Quick Billing, it takes about an hour to run billing and upload it to the clearinghouse site. Quick Billing has saved us days of work!"

WellPower has realized a 50%-time savings with the implementation of Quick Billing.

An improved claims billing process for the organization didn't stop with Quick Billing. WellPower began using Scheduled Tasks within the EHR, which automatically generates claims during off hours, such as overnight or on the weekends. This built-in myAvatar feature saves time, as billers no longer had to take time out of their day to generate claims, leaving more time to follow up on denials.

WellPower was able to go from one full-time employee spending eight hours each week to four hours on billing; saving 75% more time per week on claims processing.

Quick Billing also increased flexibility of the organization's billing processes. Instead of having each biller responsible for specific payers, staff members have been cross-trained and duties such as billing and 837 errors, posting and 835 errors, and account adjustments and manual posting can be rotated.

## The staff has achieved a 94% total time savings to the billing process, reducing the time needed to just one hour a week to review the claims process.

### Remittance posting

In addition to processing claims, a big part of the billing process takes place with remittance posting. When Netsmart first partnered with WellPower, they continued on with the manual posting of remittances from paper from their old system. It was taking two full-time WellPower employees more than 80 hours a week to post remittances from paper. Not only was this process tedious and lengthy, it was heavily prone to error. In addition, billing specialists did not have the capacity to complete account research or study the appeals and denials, leaving a lot of opportunity within remittances untouched.

WellPower realized posting remittances through an 835 would provide significant time savings. They implemented 835 processing and eventually auto-loading and posting. Through the auto-load process with myAvatar, WellPower was able to able to achieve an 87% savings compared to baseline.

"I can't even imagine going back to all manual postings!" Orecchio said. "We can post a $500,000 check in about two minutes, then work the errors, which in most cases aren't very many. We still have a few payers that we have to post manually, so we remember the pain. It has freed up so much time."

### RevConnect and myAvatar integration

There was one final step toward complete automation of billing and remittance posting that WellPower underwent; a step that was arguably the most impactful. RevConnect™, the Netsmart Clearinghouse, has added numerous benefits to the revenue cycle process, as WellPower has validated as an early adopter of this functionality. RevConnect works to improve efficiency and accuracy by minimizing user error and eliminating manual uploading and downloading of claims files to the clearinghouse.

Netsmart

WellPower runs their billing processes in myAvatar during non-business hours, which automatically generates and sends 837 files to RevConnect. Their staff has achieved a 94% total time savings to the billing process, reducing the time needed to just one hour a week to review the claims process. Similarly, a seamless integration provides automatic downloading of 835 files. With this integration, WellPower reached a 95%-time savings for posting remittances, going from 80+ hours to less than four hours a week to complete posting.

After the first batch post-integration, WellPower was able to submit 4,400 claims with only three rejections. myAvatar ran the bills, sent them to RevConnect, RevConnect scrubbed the claims and sent the clean claims to the payers.

The current claim rate for WellPower is between 98-99%, according to WellPower Financial Systems Architect, Jennifer Short.

"This integration has really forced the billing staff to think more proactively and do more active data scrubs initially," Short said. "Now, they have to trust the data is clean before it gets put on the 837 files, knowing they won't be able to edit it, often leading to less manual errors."

## Role-based consoles spur efficiency

WellPower uses role-based consoles and widgets, also part of myAvatar functionality, to further simplify billing and guide users through the workflow. The transition was hard on the billing staff at first, so they developed console views. WellPower developed several views to allow billing and posting staff to validate the automated process of billing to give staff more confidence in the system. Orecchio feels the accounts receivable team members are more efficient when using widgets to monitor work because they can easily see the tasks they're responsible for.

"
*We need billers to spend their time researching denials and making sure we get credit for all of the services we provided. They're able to do that now, as this integration saves them days of work to do that."*

Angela Oakley
Chief Financial Officer

"Having 'to-do' items present on the home screen makes people more accountable and allows both managers and billing staff to see what work has been completed and what still needs to be done," Orecchio said. "It's reduced the back-and-forth emails when a task moves from one person to another. There is also a more immediate sense of completion and satisfaction, because staff can refresh a widget and see their list of pending items going down."

## Tracking productivity

Another key benefit enabled via myAvatar: visibility to productivity metrics. Since data tracking assignments are contained within myAvatar, managers can track efficiency on measures that were previously unreportable, such as the average number of accounts that are updated each day. The system also can compile but not post certain codes, so processing can be further customized to the center's billing workflow.

Front desk staff members, who often receive cash payment from those served at the center, were trained to post the cash themselves, instead of relying on accounts receivable.

"The process of automatically posting at time of check-in has eliminated a task from accounts receivable," Orecchio said. "Before, it took three full days a month to post and make corrections. Now the people who are collecting the money can print receipts and do their own corrections and accounts are up-to-date and accurate."

## Facing recent changes head-on

Not only is the automation process helping WellPower save significant time, it's also giving the organization an upper hand in Colorado's recent reimbursement model change. In the past, mental health centers in Colorado were paid on a capitation basis, meaning they were paid a fixed monthly rate based on a per-member/per-month premise.

The recent changes shift the state to a model similar to fee-for-service. In this new model, organizations like WellPower are paid in advance and have to provide services equal to that payment amount. If not, they must refund the portion that was unused.

To find success in a stricter payment model, WellPower found they needed to automate as much as possible in order for billers to use their time most efficiently. It became vital for the billing and collection team to focus on any claims that got stuck somewhere along the way, because if something goes wrong with billing and WellPower doesn't get credit for that service, they potentially have to pay the money back. The full automation takes care of those time-consuming jobs, allowing the billers to focus on problems that could inhibit receiving full payment for their services.

"We can't afford to waste any time on tedious tasks anymore under this new model," WellPower CFO, Angela Oakley, said. "We need billers to spend their time researching denials and making sure we get credit for all of the services we provided. They're able to do that now, as this integration saves them days of work to do that."

With this integration, WellPower reached a 95%-time savings for posting remittances, going from 80+ hours to less than four hours a week to complete posting.

## Improving staff satisfaction

Keeping staff happy is a key part of any organization's success. The automation process of WellPower's billing has had a hand in improving its employees' overall satisfaction and fulfillment with work. According to Short, the billing staff is excited about the automation changes mainly because it gives them time to work on projects that allow them to use their analytical skills, such as researching denials and scrubbing claims more thoroughly, instead of the monotonous button pushing to submit claims.

"The automation process has allowed these billing specialists to use those skills they went to school for, and they love it," Short said. "Now that the tedious routine part of their job has been automated, it's just a world of opportunities and possibilities for them to focus on new challenges they didn't have capacity to explore before the automation."

**Learn more about Netsmart clients at www.ntst.com/Hear-from-clients**

**www.ntst.com**