

Top 5 reasons to implement **clinical documentation improvement (CDI)**.

Forward-thinking healthcare leaders are operationalizing CDI to drive better communication of care, reduce financial risk, improve quality reporting and create more effective patient care.

CDI adoption is on the rise.

Clinical documentation has always been a key element of a smoothly running healthcare organization. But a variety of regulatory, financial and operational factors are putting more pressure on organizations to make significant improvements to their clinical documentation processes. Healthcare leaders need to understand why and how to make CDI a central part of their operational plan.

Being an executive in a healthcare organization carries with it a challenging and demanding set of requirements that cover a wide range of operating departments. Oftentimes, compliance and other regulatory challenges, from the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to the Affordable Care Act's numerous mandates, demand so much attention that other key issues fall behind when it comes to receiving resources.

Despite competing priorities, CDI is fast becoming an increasingly important focus for healthcare organizations. There are four primary drivers:

1. CDI now is seen as a key step in dramatically improving operational efficiency of the healthcare organization.
2. Failing to address flaws in documentation processes can result in higher incidences of errors, financial losses and diminished patient care.
3. The increased regulatory burden is spiking physicians' frustration because it can reduce the amount of time they spend with their patients.
4. An industry-wide movement toward increased clinician collaboration and communication needs a strong technology underpinning in order to facilitate a more team-oriented approach to patient evaluation, diagnosis and remediation.

CDI is at the heart of many organizations' efforts to address their challenges associated with improving patient outcomes, smoothing clinical workflows, enhancing financial performance and streamlining compliance. Electronic health records (EHRs) certainly are playing a key role in the industry's efforts to improve outcomes and quality of healthcare, but many healthcare executives have strong concerns about EHRs' ability to provide the proper quality of patient documentation necessary. In fact, half of acute-care respondents to a survey conducted by the Health Business Group said they were not confident that their EHRs can effectively capture the patient story and meet their clinical documentation needs.¹ Yet, a recent Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) executive study identified improved clinical documentation accuracy as the greatest opportunity for financial improvement.²

For these and other reasons, healthcare organizations are moving aggressively to put CDI programs in place, and technology solutions are playing a central role in driving those CDI initiatives toward their goal of widespread clinician adoption, improved quality of care, enhanced financial results, and helping an organization make the most of their EHR investment.

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Reasons CDI has become a top priority.

¹ **"Clinical Documentation:** Emerging Market Trends and IT Best Practices," Health Business Group, November 2013.
² **"HFMA's Executive Survey:** Clinical Documentation Meets Financial Performance," Healthcare Financial Management Association, October 2013.

Top 5 reasons to implement CDI

Whether you're looking for a way to better reflect the complexity and severity of your patient population, integrate ever changing requirements such as quality and outcomes measures into your clinical documentation framework, or want to identify, remediate and prevent further gaps in your documentation processes, now is the time to embrace CDI. Here are five reasons why:

1. Improve clinician engagement. For a variety of quality, patient safety and compliance reasons, collaboration among clinicians is more important than ever. Adopting CDI solutions will establish a common platform for information sharing and real-time reporting, resulting in greater communication and partnership among different clinical teams and improved patient outcomes. As clinicians discover the benefits of having a greater amount of more granular, yet appropriate data to make diagnoses and remediate problems, they will be even more likely to engage with the system and one another. In the end, it will make it easier for them to provide better, more timely clinical documentation without burdening them with unfamiliar processes and allowing them to do what they most prefer—spend more time with their patients.

2. Better clinical workflows. An effective CDI program focuses on establishing a dialogue between the Clinical Documentation Improvement Specialist and the clinician as part of their clinical thought process as they work within their EHR to document patient care. Advanced CDI solutions offer the major benefit of enabling clinicians to spend more time with their patients through the innovative use of technology, such as natural language processing, speech input and familiar mobile devices that are consistent with workflows at the healthcare facility or off-site. Most importantly, CDI breaks down operational and information silos by integrating workflows and information—all while helping you make the most of your healthcare investments and avoiding added burden on clinical documentation specialists.

3. Enable better patient outcomes. Because today's CDI solutions are designed to drive clinician adoption through workflow-sensitive technologies and processes, the richer and more timely set of data that results improves accuracy, provides more detailed information and easier, more regular communication that is essential to improving patient outcomes. Complete documentation, tied into real-world clinical workflows, enables more collaboration in order to identify patients at risk for potential complications, allows physicians to implement preventative measures sooner, improves discharge planning, and reduces hospital readmissions that escalate costs and degrade patient satisfaction.

4. Financial benefits. One of the biggest motivators for adopting CDI solutions is the proven, demonstrable improvement in Case Mix Index, resulting in increased revenues and the best possible utilization of high-value specialists. CDI solutions also are a critical link in ensuring full and timelier reimbursements from insurers and other payers, as well as avoiding costly penalties of non-compliance. Also, by using CDI to establish the severity of illnesses and risk of mortality, it ensures the development of risk-adjusted outcome profiles and appropriate payments for hospitals and physicians.

5. Ensure compliance. Every executive knows that healthcare compliance mandates are a moving target, and the lack of accurate, real-time clinical documentation can result in failed audits, huge fines and significant financial investments to remediate the problems. Withstanding the impact of the many compliance audits healthcare organizations must undergo is heavy dependence upon hyper-accurate, consistent clinical documentation. When planned and implemented properly, CDI enables the creation and reporting of information about the patient's care setting that will help avoid penalties.

CDI solutions enable clinicians to spend more time with their patients.

At the same time, well-thought-out CDI strategies and solutions ensure high levels of agility necessary to meet always-shifting regulatory requirements. Finally, CDI is a critical step in not only ensuring easier transition to ICD-10 and other regulatory changes but also in avoiding problems that could easily pop up after the implementation. In the same way as compliance is much more than simply passing an audit, any major change to the coding infrastructure is actually much more about what happens after the transition than it is in simply meeting the implementation requirements.

Nuance: leading the way with progressive CDI solutions

Drawing upon more than 20 years of clinical documentation expertise from Nuance's J.A. Thomas & Associates (JATA), Nuance's Clintegrity 360 | CDI solutions are designed to help healthcare organizations build and operate a comprehensive, end-to-end CDI framework in order to improve all health care-related activities—clinical, operational and financial.

The Clintegrity 360 | CDI program, powered by JATA, is offered as part of the Clintegrity 360 solutions suite, an enterprise-wide platform for clinical documentation improvement, coding, compliance and quality, that guarantees improvements in Case Mix Index from 4–8%. Using clinically focused education, strategies and Clinical Language Understanding (CLU), an innovative natural language processing technology to enable tight integration and alignment, Clintegrity 360 helps organizations positively impact patient care, improve financial performance by ensuring accuracy for full and rapid reimbursement, and provides a reliable platform for compliance and quality reporting, all in real time. Clintegrity 360's design as a single, Web-based platform helps break down operational and clinical silos that often build up around clinical documentation activities.

Additionally, Nuance's Dragon Medical 360 solutions use the company's market-leading speech recognition technology to help clinicians meet the always-changing demands for CDI by allowing them to use front- and back-end speech solutions for clinical documentation that easily integrate with their everyday workflow. Dragon Medical 360 optimizes efficiency by supporting clinicians' speech input directly to EHRs from any device and from any location, at any time.

Numerous healthcare organizations have used Nuance's solutions as key parts of their CDI initiatives. Summit Health, a regional health care system in Pennsylvania, deployed the Clintegrity 360 solution for both inpatient and outpatient settings to address a range of their CDI needs. Summit officials cited the use of Clintegrity 360 and Dragon Medical 360 for improved physician engagement, a significant jump in productivity, as well as a heightened capability to use data to benchmark its performance against national metrics.³

Conclusion

CDI is now a fundamental, strategic part of healthcare organizations' efforts to improve patient outcomes, enhance clinician adoption of advanced clinical documentation frameworks, ensure compliance and upgrade financial performance. Today's new CDI solutions are making it possible for organizations to use familiar technologies and workflow to drive clinician acceptance, increase collaboration and ensure the availability of timely, accurate information to improve diagnosis and impact quality and patient care.



now part of Nuance

Nuance's CDI solutions, powered by JATA, have helped hundreds of healthcare organizations streamline their clinical documentation efforts while delivering richer, more actionable information—benefitting patients, clinicians and the organization itself. Complementing innovative technologies such as the Clintegrity 360 | CDI platform and the Dragon Medical 360 speech recognition platform, Nuance's proven CDI solutions help healthcare organizations improve all aspects of their operations—patient safety and satisfaction, financial results, compliance and clinical workflow.

To learn more about Clintegrity 360 | CDI solutions, visit www.nuance.com/go/cdi or call (877) 805-5902.

4-8%

CMI improvement—guaranteed.

³ Summit Health takes a comprehensive approach to [Clinical Data Improvement with Clintegrity 360 Computer-Assisted Coding, CDI and Physician Education Case Study](#)