

# FRONT LINES

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## PREPARE FOR RISING PHYSICIAN UTILIZATION

*Excerpt from an article written by  
John Hawkins, CEO  
Merritt, Hawkins & Associates  
THASG Strategic Partner  
Published in Nashville Medical News  
April 2001*

While diversity is a key issue in healthcare and many other fields, it is not the only major trend being monitored by the U.S. Census Bureau.

In addition to becoming more ethnically diverse, the United States is aging. The Census Bureau projects that the number of people 65 years old or older will double from about 35 million today to about 70 million in 2030.

While rising population numbers will drive physician utilization in some markets (particularly in high immigration areas), patient aging will be the key to physician utilization in the majority of rural areas and in many urban areas where immigration is not a major demographic trend.

Diagnostic imaging is one area that will be particularly affected by patient aging.

Research conducted by HealthHelp, a Houston, Texas-based consulting firm and National Imaging Associates (NIA), a consulting firm based in Hackensack, N.J., underlines the impact aging will have in imaging.

Looking at imaging modality utilization per 1,000 patients in a variety of health plans, NIA found radiography to be the most highly utilized modality nationally, followed by general ultrasound, mammography and CT.

The HealthHelp study tracked projected utilization rates of patients as they move into and through their Medicare years, starting in the year 2000. By the year 2010, utilization of diagnostic imaging by Medicare patients nationally is expected to rise by 37 percent, and by 2020 is expected to rise by 85 percent.

By the year 2020, people aged 65 and older will account for more than 205 million images annually. Among females age 65 and older, to-

tal projected studies will be highest in the areas of breast disease diagnosis. Among males in this age group, the total number of projected studies will be highest in heart disease diagnosis.

These utilization studies carry a clear inference for anyone concerned with healthcare staffing issues. The market for radiation technologists, ultrasound sonographers and other allied radiologic science professionals will become more competitive. Recruiting radiologists, who already are in short supply in some areas, will become more difficult. The need for support personnel, picture archiving and communications systems (PACS) specialists and related experts will grow.

This trend is not limited to diagnostic imaging. Patient aging will put pressure on the medical community to provide adequate internal medicine services, as well as surgical, emergency and psychiatric services.

## PRACTICE RESOURCE NETWORK NEW THASG VENDOR

Practice Resource Network is a new vendor with THA Solutions Group. PRN has been in business for over 15 years and last year processed in excess of 600,000 claims with charges in excess of \$200 million dollars.

PRN has a new Windows-based "niche" product that allows PRN to:

- Audit existing claims within a facility.

- Provide appropriate guidance for clean-up of those "lost" insurance claims which never were paid.
- Provide client with an efficient and electronic method for improving accounts receivable collections.
- Edit and clear claims for almost any software that can produce a print image file.

For more information, call Tony Holshouser, PRN, at 615/661-8929 or Wes Reade, THA Solutions Group, at 800-258-9541.

## THE WORK INSTITUTE, NEW THASG VENDOR

The Work Institute was founded by occupational behavior researchers and counselors with significant operational and human resource experience.

A compelling reason for the foundation of the company rests in the Work Institute's simple mission statement.

The Work Institute helps organizations attract, retain, and develop human assets to optimize individual and organizational performance and profitability.

### CORE BELIEFS:

- ◆ Attraction and Retention: We Can and Must Do Something - NOW!
- ◆ Human Asset Expenditures Must Be Aligned with Real Issues, and Based on ROI Opportunity.
- ◆ Companies Must Develop a Measurement First Mentality.
- ◆ Companies Must Quit Depending On Others' Best Practices and Start Looking At Their Own Best Practices.

The achilles heel of a strategic plan today is implementation. The achilles heel of implementation is either: a) not having the necessary skills and knowledge (people) to implement the plan or b) having the necessary skills and knowledge (people) who quit!

For more information contact, Tom Mahan, The Work Institute, at 770/449-1755, or contact Wes Reade, THA Solutions Group, at 800-258-9541.

## WATTERS AND ASSOCIATES, NEW THASG VENDOR

Watters and Associates was established in 1988 to assist non profit hospitals in developing effective ongoing fundraising programs. With over a decade of experience working with both large and small hospitals, it has the unique skills to build support foundations that make a significant difference. The daily demands on management leave little time for planning and implementing effective fundraising programs so it uses its experience to help clients increase their contributions and eliminate non-productive efforts.

The company offers consulting help for both existing and start-up programs.

Existing programs can be evaluated and improvement strategies created. For new programs, the firm will lead management and the board of directors through the process, beginning with a community assessment and ending with a fully functioning development program. Services provided include:

- Retreat Workshops and Board Education
- Mission Creation
- Community Surveys
- Foundation Organization
- Development Policies
- Operating Budgets

- Recruitment and Training of Development Director
- Remembrance Giving
- Annual Giving
- Planned Giving
- Grant Applications
- Special Events
- Donor Recognition Programs
- Planning

For more information, contact Gregg Watters, Watters and Associates, at 770/449-1755, or contact Wes Reade, THA Solutions Group, at 800-258-9541.

## SUREBILL, INC., NEW THASG VENDOR

The SureBill company prints and mails medical bills, statements, late notices and other variable data documents. Customer data is electronically transferred to the production facility where the bills are printed, inserted into an envelope and delivered to the postal facility.

SureBill clients may take advantage of the discounted postal rate for pre-sorted first class mail, and addresses are confirmed to eliminate unnecessary cost. The documents are mailed the day after the data is received.

The entire process meets all of the HIPAA requirements for patient privacy. Outstanding quality control and a sincere dedication to exemplary service are verifiable through references.

The potential savings are significant, partially due to the absence of "set up fees" or "administrative charges". Additional savings are available since SureBill manufactures envelopes.

For more information, contact Ralph Armistead or Chris Deedy, Surebill, at 770/449-1755, or

Wes Reade, THA Solutions Group at 800-258-9541.

