



# MEDCO FORUM®

PRESENTING INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 18 NUMBER 55

NOVEMBER 2011  
REPRINT

## PRIORITY CONSULT SPINE CARE ANNOUNCES NEW OUTCOMES MODULE

*Software Supports Rapid Patient Care Triage and Work Flow  
Within a Hospital-Based Spine Center or Private Surgical Practice*

In an era of fierce competition among spine surgery providers and an increasingly informed consumer population, Priority Consult stands apart as a leader among software applications for collecting and reporting clinical outcomes for spine.

Such a differentiator is a must in today's highly competitive spine surgery marketplace, where sophisticated consumers use the Internet and other sources to research surgeon expertise, utilization of non-surgical treatments, return-to-work rates, and spine patient satisfaction. The new Priority Consult outcomes module provides spine centers and surgery practices with the tools to use their data to aid in decision-making and best practice standards.

### **Attract New Patients from a Discriminating Public**

Integrated spine centers and practices are putting software and procedures in place to track and evaluate procedural outcomes, then providing this information to payers and the public. The result? Those practices that can show excellent clinical outcomes are improving their success rate in attracting new patients.

A fully integrated electronic system is a necessity in the implementation of effective triage and electronic medical records. Long a popular choice among spine practices, Priority Consult now tracks clinical

outcomes. Priority Consult was built by spine care professionals and is easily implemented; most organizations implement the new Priority Consult outcomes module with few or no additional staff.

### **Analyze Outcomes For Best Practices**

According to Maurice Collada, M.D., neurosurgeon at Salem Spine Center in Salem, OR, his group of neurosurgeons have worked together not only to use Priority Consult to improve efficiency and patient care, but also to position Salem Spine Center to go for Joint Commission certification as a Center of Excellence. The director of a multidisciplinary, 12-person advisory council, Dr. Collada explains, "We set up the advisory council to develop algorithms that show whether we are following best practice standards. Priority Consult is the platform we have used to establish connectivity among ourselves and to launch our efforts to standardize and improve spine treatment in the community."

Jane Ray, R.N., B.S.N. and spine center manager/care coordinator at Salem Spine Center, sits on an outcomes task force with representatives from more than 20 other spine centers that continue to help develop and refine the product. She describes regular monthly meetings: "We organize and review protocols, and collect and debate issues encountered from an operational perspective by hospitals and spine

centers across the nation. Then we provide suggestions for improvement to Priority Consult, which has been very responsive to our feedback.” Any Priority Consult customer can attend these task force meetings.

### **Provide More Timely, Coordinated Patient Care**

Since 2003, Priority Consult has helped nearly 50 spine practices and spine centers in 28 states become more efficient, effective and competitive. Take patient wait times—often a “hot button” with patients—as an example. “Priority Consult allows our neurosurgeons to systematically and efficiently screen patients and get them to the right practitioner, so they don’t have to wait 10 to 12 weeks just to hear that they’re not a candidate for surgery,” notes Dr. Collada.

Developed by the Mayfield Clinic & Spine Institute in Cincinnati and used by spine centers nationwide for nearly a decade, Priority Consult enables the intake of patient clinical information and the review and triage of a spine patient’s medical history, films and reports by a specialist within hours of the referral. Priority Consult tracks patients for the duration of their care, providing physicians and staff with the tools to initiate treatment, testing, consultation and follow-up by continuing to collect post-surgery information from them through surveys, letters and telephone communications.

The software is universally available online and is applicable for any size medical facility, from large hospitals to small private practices. Software-provided scripts ensure that staff will ask the right questions and provide patients with answers that have been approved by the participating physicians. A patient portal and built-in letter templates make tracking patients and collecting data easier than ever.

### **Customized Reporting**

Ray explains that the Salem Spine Center outcomes collection process includes monthly, quarterly and ad hoc reports from Priority Consult that inform them of factors such as an improvement or worsening of their patients’ Oswestry, Neck Disability Index and VAS pain scales. Priority Consult also allows her to measure collection rates and determine which strategies facilitate greater patient participation in the program.

With a proven and customized implementation methodology, Priority Consult allows clients to:

- Start collecting data immediately
- Achieve exceptional response rates
- Reduce the operational expense of implementing an outcomes program
- Validate treatment effectiveness
- Market the quality of care
- Meet payer requirements for programs such as the Blue Cross Centers of Distinction

*“Workers’ Compensation and other insurance companies want to know whether patients are improving from a functional standpoint, and the outcomes module allows us to measure that.”*

Billy Naquin, P.T., director of Thibodaux Spine Center in Thibodaux, LA, points out that in today’s environment, “Workers’ Compensation and other insurance companies want to know whether patients are improving from a functional standpoint, and the outcomes module allows us to measure that.”

To prove the effectiveness of processes and procedures, Naquin explains that Thibodaux Spine Center “routinely reviews graphs and reports that show how many patients improve after getting treatment through our facility. We do an initial assessment of every patient, then another assessment at 3 months, one at 6 months, one at a year and then one at two years. The software helps us analyze our own process improvements and allows us to benchmark ourselves against other spine centers.”

For more information about Priority Consult, call (866) 396-1445 or send an email to [pcinfo@priorityconsult.com](mailto:pcinfo@priorityconsult.com); visit the website at [priorityconsult.com](http://priorityconsult.com).

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