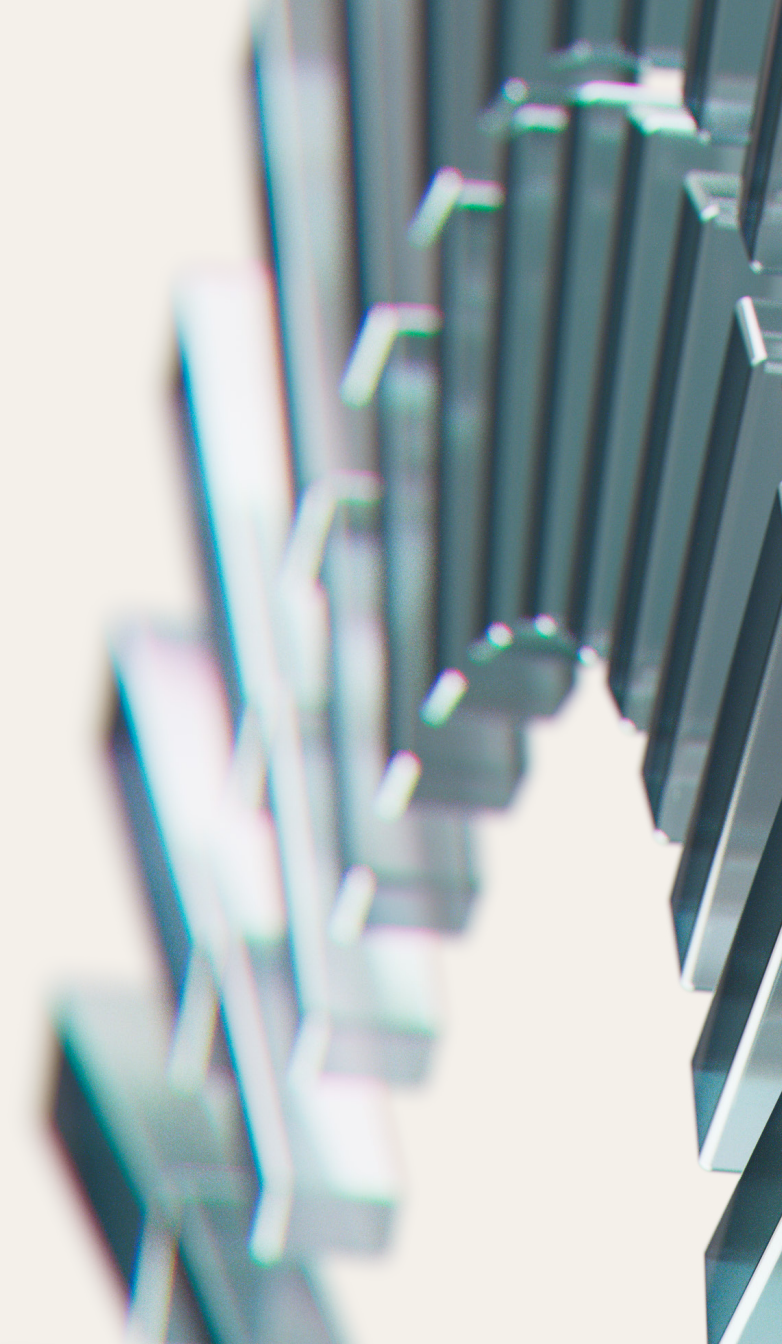




## **CUSTOMER STORY**

# **How Providence Health System Gave Caregivers More Time for Patients by Simplifying Statements**

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[Providence Health System](#) has spent more than a century focused on caring for the poor and vulnerable. That purpose-driven mission extends across every part of the Washington-based organization, from clinicians to billing teams. “Every person who works here – we are all caregivers trying to do our best to live out the mission,” said Keri Huegli, Supervisor of Billing and Collections, Home Medical Equipment.

But living out that mission becomes harder when too much time is spent on administrative work. When internal processes break down, it doesn’t just affect operations – it affects patients. Caregivers have less time to help, and simple interactions start to feel frustrating instead of supportive. Luckily, the team was committed to finding a solution.

**Company:** Providence Health System

**Type:** Mission-driven, not-for-profit Catholic health system

**Success:** Reduced manual patient statements, freed up staff time, cut call wait times from 10 minutes to under 60 seconds, and made it easier for patients to pay



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— **Keri Huegli**, Supervisor of Billing and Collections, Home Medical Equipment, Providence Health System

# A Manual Process That Pulled Everyone Away From Patients

Before Inovalon, sending patient statements was a fully manual process. Each month, the team handled around 20,000 statements by printing, folding, and stuffing envelopes one by one. Huegli described walking into an office where “every surface, every file cabinet, every printer, every desk was just covered with office supplies to do our statements.”

For a five-person team, the workload affected everything else. Staff had to constantly shift their attention away from patients just to keep up. The process even required traveling to a central location each month to handle statement printing, adding another time-consuming step to an already overwhelming workload. Service levels slipped, calls went unanswered, and patients were left waiting. Huegli recalled that their goal was to answer calls within 60 seconds, but wait times stretched to 10 minutes and abandonment rates – which is the number of patients that call in and hang up before someone answers – climbed into the teens, well above their 5% target.

“Having to do the statements process manually really prevented us from hitting our other goals,” she said. “We would get behind on statements and then on calls, so it was a process that wasn’t working or sustainable.”

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Patients calling with billing questions can be confused or concerned, so longer wait times only add to the stress of what can be an already difficult situation.

As Huegli put it, “Who wants to call in to billing and collections and then have to wait even longer?”

## Recognizing the Need for a Better Way

The team knew the process could not continue. The manual workload wasn’t just time-consuming – it was pulling attention away from patients and making it harder to meet service goals.

As statements piled up each week, staff were forced to divide their time between administrative tasks and patient calls, creating a constant backlog. The result was a system that couldn’t keep up, where delays were inevitable and the patient experience suffered.

It became clear that this wasn’t something that could be fixed with small adjustments. The team needed a different approach to remove the burden of manual work altogether.

The goal was to give time back to caregivers so they could focus on helping patients, while creating a billing experience that felt simpler and easier to navigate.



# Making It Easier for Patients to Understand and Pay

With Inovalon's [Patient Statement Management](#)™, the organization shifted from paper-heavy workflows to digital delivery through text and email. This eliminated the need for staff to travel to a central location for statement printing, allowing the organization to close that site entirely and reduce associated costs. It also gave patients a simpler way to engage with their bills and take action, which is a difference they noticed right away.

Huegli noted that the change created “a new way for our patients to be able to pay that is much more seamless,” reducing the confusion that often comes with paper statements and making it easier to know what has been paid and what has not.

“We didn’t have the QR code on the statements before, so having that easy access for the patients has been really helpful.”

Adoption followed quickly. Within the first few months, nearly 2,000 text messages and over 1,100 emails were sent, with email delivery running nearly equal to mailed statements and continuing to grow.



Our team is on track to save about \$75,000 annually in office supplies alone.”

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“We’re really reducing the amount of paper statements that have to go out, which is amazing, and those numbers just keep ticking up as the text messages and emails go out each month,” Huegli explained.

As more patients shifted away from paper, the team also saw fewer issues with returned mail. Huegli noted a dramatic drop in patients appearing on address correction reports – from hundreds to just 13 – helping reduce the risk of missed statements and accounts slipping toward collections or bad debt.

The more people Providence signs up for the paperless statements, the greater the savings for the organization. “Our team is on track to save about \$75,000 annually in office supplies alone,” Huegli said.

## Freeing Up Time for More Meaningful Patient Interactions

As the manual workload decreased, the team was able to refocus on the work that matters. Instead of spending hours managing paper and envelopes, they could respond to patients more quickly and have better conversations.



This shift helped address the very issues that had been holding the team back. With less time spent on administrative tasks, staff could keep up with call volumes, reduce delays, and create a smoother experience for patients who needed help. Wait times improved dramatically, dropping from as long as 10 minutes to 60 seconds or less.

**“Now we’re consistently answering our phones within a minute, and our abandonment rate is below 5%,” Huegli said. “We’re finally hitting the goals we weren’t able to before.”**

Just as importantly, the work itself began to feel different. Instead of constantly reacting to backlogs and trying to keep up with statement processing, the team had more control over their day. They could focus their attention on helping patients understand their bills and resolving questions more efficiently.

“The weight that’s been lifted off the whole team’s shoulders for everyone to be able to do what they were hired to do, which is serving our patients, is significant,” Huegli said. “And it’s showing up in our metrics, which is to me, is the most amazing thing. It has revolutionized our team.”



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# When Time Back Makes a Human Difference

The impact of freeing up time goes beyond metrics and efficiency. For Huegli, it shows up most clearly in the moments when she can slow down and truly help someone who needs it.

She recalled speaking with a man whose wife had recently passed away. He was trying to sort through her medical equipment and understand what he still owed, navigating both grief and confusion at the same time. Instead of rushing through the call or juggling competing priorities, Huegli had the time to listen, understand the situation, and take action.

“He was just trying to figure everything out...and I was able to take care of it for him.”

After reviewing the account, she was able to write off the remaining balance, which brought immediate relief.

“He cried, and I cried,” she shared.

Moments like that are why reducing administrative burden matters. When caregivers are no longer overwhelmed by manual work, they can show up differently for patients – not just solving problems, but providing support when it matters most.



# Supporting the Mission by Supporting Caregivers

For Providence Health System, the impact goes beyond operational improvements. Making patient statements simpler and reducing manual work supports the organization's broader mission by allowing caregivers to spend more time helping those in need.

Huegli's perspective reflects that shift. When every employee is seen as a caregiver, even small improvements in how work gets done can have a meaningful effect on the patient experience. By removing friction behind the scenes, the organization is better positioned to deliver the compassionate, high-quality care it's known for.

"At the end of the day, we're all here to take care of people. When we're not tied up in all the manual work, we can actually be there for patients the way we're meant to be."



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## Helping Teams Focus on What Matters Most

Providence Health System's experience shows what's possible when administrative work no longer competes with patient care. By simplifying statements and giving patients easier ways to pay, the organization reduced strain on its team and improved the overall experience at the same time.

For healthcare organizations facing similar challenges, the opportunity is clear: reduce the work that slows your team down, and give them more time to focus on the people they serve.

## Ready to Reduce Statement Work and Reclaim Staff Time?

See how Inovalon helps reduce administrative work and simplify patient payments.

[Request a Demo](#)

