



Data Redemption.

From 'Yellow' to 'Green': How Northern Arizona Healthcare Fixed a Quality Benchmark

The Challenge

The Hidden Cost of Missing Data: In the third quarter of 2023 (Q3 2023), Northern Arizona Healthcare (NAH) was facing a critical data challenge: their performance benchmark for a key quality metric was classified as “**yellow**.” This underperformance was driven by a significant number of missing data fields related to **pre-TIMI flow and post-stenosis metrics** within the CathPCI Registry. The core issue wasn't the clinical care itself, but rather the insufficient documentation being provided by physicians within the Electronic Medical Record.



The Solution

Implementing a Data-Driven Partnership

During this same quarter (Q3 2023), NAH implemented Carta Healthcare as its clinical abstraction partner. Recognizing that simply collecting existing data wasn't enough, the partnership immediately shifted focus to data quality and process alignment.

Carta Healthcare deployed a robust methodology designed to identify and close documentation gaps:

- **Rigorous Quality Control:** Inter-rater reliability (IRR) assessments were conducted on a minimum of 5% of monthly cases, consistently achieving an average accuracy rate exceeding 98%.
- **Proactive Communication:** The teams utilized secure shared spreadsheets, reviewed daily, to track critical client-related data and monitor case progress efficiently.
- **Weekly Accountability:** Carta Healthcare provided weekly reports detailing progress and identifying specific instances of missing data, which were then discussed in collaborative weekly meetings.
- **Continuous Submission:** Data was submitted to the NCDR weekly, allowing for real-time review of facility dashboard metrics.



The Turning Point

Collaboration Drives Documentation Change

The success of the project hinged on effective collaboration between Carta Healthcare, NAH, and the NAH physician group. Through this collaboration, a marked improvement in documentation for pre-TIMI flow and post-stenosis was observed.

To institutionalize these improvements, a significant procedural step was taken: a **signed letter outlining the PCI protocol** was implemented. This letter specifically addressed commonly missed data points and provided guidelines for documentation that would be accepted by the NCDR, effectively closing any remaining information gaps.

The Results

Shifting the Benchmark to Green

The commitment to precise quality abstraction and collaborative documentation led to a dramatic and sustained improvement.

The most telling result was the change in the facility's overall benchmark status:

- **Before (Q3 2023):** Classified as **Yellow**.
- **After (Q2 2024):** Consistently achieved **Green Status**, demonstrating a complete recovery of data integrity following implementation.

This case shows that effective abstraction is **More Than Just Abstraction** and a partnership focused on improving documentation quality ensures high-quality clinical care is accurately reflected in national registry reporting.