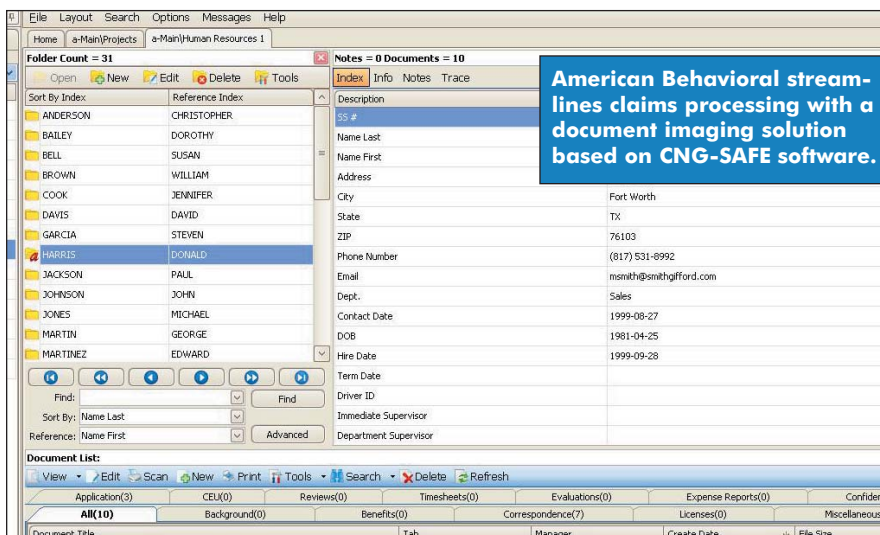




# Document Imaging Tames Healthcare Claims

*By imaging claims forms and managing them electronically, American Behavioral has improved productivity and customer service while reducing costs.*

by Ken Congdon



According to *CNN Money*, inefficient claims processing costs the U.S. healthcare system more than \$200 billion per year. These inefficiencies are often attributed to the manual, paper-based practices many healthcare facilities still use to process claims. All too often, handling paper claims leads to data entry errors, misplaced files, and low productivity and profitability. American Behavioral, a managed behavioral healthcare organization, experienced the cost of inefficient claims processing first-hand and addressed the problem by implementing a simple document imaging solution.

## THE PAPER CHASE HURTS CUSTOMER SERVICE

Prior to 2008, American Behavioral processed, managed, and stored claim documents in their native paper format. The company

received more than 2,000 HCFA (Health Care Financing Administration) forms in the mail per week, and data from these documents were manually entered into the claim system by American Behavioral claim examiners. The claim form, along with corresponding EOBs (explanation of benefits) forms and copies of checks, were then filed in a main file room at the company's headquarters in Birmingham, AL.

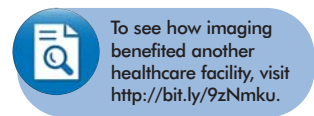
Claims examiners at American Behavioral weren't only responsible for recording data from collected forms into the system; they were also tasked with answering customer claims calls. This is where inefficiencies in the paper-based claims system became most apparent.

"Every time a patient would call to inquire about the status of their claim, one of our examiners would have to put the patient on hold and

go to the file room to find and retrieve the appropriate file," says Vickie Wood, senior claims examiner for American Behavioral. "This process typically took several minutes. And, sometimes, the requested file couldn't be located at all. In both cases, this act reflected poorly on us from a customer service standpoint. Furthermore, our examiners spent a good portion of their days filing and searching for claims documents."

## ELECTRONIC FILE ACCESS PROVIDES PRODUCTIVITY ADVANTAGES

By mid-2008, American Behavioral had enough of the paper chase and decided to implement a document imaging solution from Cabinet-NG. The solution consisted of Cabinet-NG's CNG-SAFE (Shared Access File Environment), Retriever, and Synchronizer software modules. CNG-SAFE is an electronic document management solution that consolidates information into one multiuser workflow environment. The software includes built-in document imaging, workflow, and security features. The Retriever and Synchronizer modules work to integrate CNG-SAFE with line-of-business applications, such as American Behavioral's claim system. This integration allows claims examiners to access document images associated with specific patients directly from the claims system. The new solu-





## CASE STUDY

# Vertical Applications

tion only took a few days to install and was fully operational by August 2008.

Using the new solution, incoming paper claim forms are now scanned daily by examiners using a Sharp AR-M550N Digital Imager MFP (multifunction peripheral). These images are then imported to CNG-SAFE. Examiners use two computer monitors to process the claim — one monitor displays the

physical storage space as a result of the document imaging solution.”

The success of document imaging in American Behavioral’s claims department convinced the company to expand the solution to three additional departments — EAP (Employee

Assistance Department), Provider Relations, and Accounting. Furthermore, the healthcare services provider has future plans to process a virtual telephone documentation form using the CNG solution within the coming months. ■

**“The increased productivity and time savings we have gained by accessing document images electronically ... is equivalent to one full-time employee.”**

Vickie Wood, American Behavioral

claim form image in CNG-SAFE and the other displays the member screen on American Behavioral’s claim system. Once approved, the claim document is stored in CNG-SAFE, and the document repository is linked directly to the corresponding member page in the claim system using Retriever and Synchronizer. In other words, examiners can quickly access all claim documents associated with a patient directly from their account page in the claim system, making document retrieval a quick and painless process that can be accomplished at the touch of a button using a PC. Therefore, examiners no longer have to search for paper files to address patient telephone inquiries. They can now fulfill these requests immediately without placing the patient on hold.

The results of this fairly basic document imaging solution have been notable. “The increased productivity and time savings we have gained by accessing document images electronically as opposed to searching through paper files is equivalent to one full-time employee,” says Wood. “We’re also saving more than \$1,000 a year on office supplies and have freed up

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