



## Customer Relationship Communications

# DOC1<sup>®</sup> Leverages Xerox Highlight Color for Patient Centered Statements

Sloan Kettering sought to improve the readability of its patient billing documents and experienced a wide range of benefits, including

- Improving the look and feel of the patient bills by varying fonts, including color and managing white space effectively
- Reducing in-bound billing-related inquiries
- Providing customer service representatives with access to patient statements online for faster, more personalized customer service

Manhattan's Memorial Hospital, a unit of the renowned Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, handles some 30,000 outpatient visits each month. On top of that enormous volume, the hospital faces a dual problem it shares with medical institutions all over the country: an increasingly complex health-care insurance and billing environment, coupled with an aging patient population.

In such circumstances, producing patient account statements that are relatively easy to understand—and encourage accurate and prompt responses from patients—was a major challenge. To help meet it, Memorial's patient accounts department turned to Xerox printing systems partner Group 1 Software and its DOC1 document composition and production system.

### THE CHALLENGE

Memorial's monthly patient account statement includes more than two dozen information fields. Some fields, like those summarizing treatments and billing transactions, may list 20 or 30 specific items per month. And even though not all fields are applicable to a given patient in a given month, state law requires that the statement include all fields, even if they're blank.

Memorial was producing statements in a black-and-white line-printer format that afforded little or no visual distinction between groups of fields. Even sharp-eyed patients found the statements difficult to

understand. The difficulty was compounded for the hospital's elderly patients, especially those with visual or cognitive impairments.

The result? The patient accounts department spent far too much time on the telephone, explaining and justifying charges and insurance payments for confused or irate patients, many of whom didn't understand their bills and often simply refused to pay. Not only were many accounts delinquent or in disarray, but Memorial's relationships with a crucial set of customers—its patients—were severely strained. The hospital needed a new statement that is easy to read and understand, answers many of the questions patients asked over the phone, and can be produced economically using existing source data residing on an IBM 4381 mainframe.

### THE SOLUTION

Group 1 document systems analysts worked with Memorial staffers to review the hospital's statement production process. An immediate asset in redesigning the process was a Xerox 4850 highlight color printer that was being used to produce reports and other hospital documents, but not statements.

The old statements were printed on blue preprinted forms, and the hospital wanted to continue to use color in the redesigned statements. So the 4850 was a natural. And Group 1's DOC1 composition system provides a PC-based document design and application development capability that

easily interfaces with mainframe systems and can generate customized, one-to-one statements as Metacode datastreams.

DOC1 design specialists came up with a new, patient-oriented statement that met all the hospital's requirements by taking full advantage of the power of electronic printing.

- To produce the statement, DOC1 seamlessly integrates word-processing text files, patient billing information, the hospital's logo and other text and graphic elements.
- Each numbered section on the first page of the statement is explained on the second page, and a separate page contains questions and answers conditionally printed based on the patient's primary insurance coverage and payment responsibilities.
- A highly readable combination of fonts, blue and gray shading, and white space make the information in each section distinct and readable.
- With DOC1, the hospital now has a patient-friendly statement that leverages the features of the Xerox 4850—and the capability, when needed, to interface automatically with advanced mail-sorting systems.

"The DOC1 document designer brought a lot to the project. She understood how people read and synthesize information. The new statement uses ample white space and both upper and lower case type, so the reader doesn't feel overwhelmed by a sea of text. The new bill also uses shading, different fonts, and highlight

color to emphasize the most important information - such as 'the amount you owe,'" continued Ms. Howie.

The DOC1 team delivered a turnkey solution for Memorial Sloan-Kettering — from statement design, to application development, implementation and production support. For instance, the medical industry often stores transaction information in all uppercase text, which is extremely hard to read. Group 1 was able to convert the transaction information from all upper case to the proper casing presentation, improving the usability of the statement.

Group 1 also integrated DOC1 output with Memorial Sloan-Kettering's online viewing and archival system to ensure the patient accounts personnel could retrieve and view the statements on-line.

The staff of the patient accounts department expects to receive fewer calls requesting clarification once patients get used to their new bill. And although it's too early to tell, Memorial Sloan-Kettering is hoping to receive the same results as another hospital that recently used Group 1 to redesign and implement a new statement - Butterworth Hospital of Grand Rapids, MI. The new statement helped Butterworth decrease patient calls by 20% and saved \$30,000 in printing and mailing costs in the first year, and their patients are paying their bills faster.

*"We knew we wanted an education page that could answer the questions we receive most frequently over the phone, such as 'Do you bill my insurance company directly'? DOC1 lets us dynamically customize this page for each patient. Now we explain the specific benefits and billing procedures that pertain to that patient's primary and secondary insurance provider."*

*Kim Howie  
Associate Director  
Patient Financial Accounts*

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