

## CASE STUDY: PACE Southeast Michigan

*Ensured Compliance and Optimized  
Revenue through Collaboration with  
Medicare Risk Adjustment Experts*

### The Partner

In the early 1990s, Henry Ford Health System in Michigan embarked on expanding its services to include the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). PACE Southeast Michigan (PACE SEMI), originally Center for Senior Independence, opened in 1994, serving seniors in Wayne County, and later in portions of Macomb and Oakland counties. Since its inception, the organization's goal has been "to provide our frail senior community members with the care, medical treatment, and support they need to achieve the highest quality of life – while staying independent for as long as possible." PACE SEMI's passion to care for the frail elderly has proven successful, as it is now one of the largest PACE organizations in the country, with over 1,300 participants across six centers.



### The Challenge

New value-based payment models, including PACE, are tied to quality and outcomes of care provided. Understanding and obtaining skills in managing various elements, including clinical documentation and coding methodologies, impact Medicare risk scores and help optimize appropriate payment. Medicare risk adjustment practices in value-based care settings can be a challenge for providers new to PACE, because learning new documentation methods can be difficult and time consuming.

By 2016, PACE SEMI's Medicare risk score was steadily decreasing. The organization was growing quickly, and seasoned providers had limited time to train new providers in Medicare risk adjustment. PACE SEMI needed support and contracted with Capstone to provide core services, including ongoing auditing of documentation and coding, extensive data analytics, customized training based on live audit trends, and monitoring.

However, once the collaboration began, a new challenge emerged. According to Jeff Burmeister, Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer of PACE SEMI, "We were challenged with getting our providers' buy-in to attend Capstone's quarterly trainings and completing the audit response worksheets timely."



## The Solution

Since 2005, Capstone has helped value-based care organizations ensure compliance and optimize revenue. Capstone's experienced team includes physician-consultants, nurse auditors, and Hierarchical Condition Category (HCC)-certified coders who have worked in value-based care delivery models and are experts in Medicare risk adjustment. Services are customizable and include provider-to-provider/staff training, auditing, and concurrent coding. Capstone's collaborative approach is industry-proven, its services receive positive reviews, and clients typically see a very favorable return on investment.

"We initially chose Capstone because trust was there," said Burmeister. "Capstone made several appealing presentations and developed positive rapport with our medical director."

Capstone responded to PACE SEMI's time and travel limitations, and Capstone's physician-consultants customized on-site training services for groups and individuals. "Once the relationships were built, it was easier for our seasoned physicians to send other physicians and advanced practitioners to the remote training sessions," said Burmeister.



## The Results

The collaboration between PACE SEMI and Capstone has resulted in ensured regulatory compliance and increased revenue. "In our first year, we were able to realize approximately \$1.8 million in additional revenue," said Burmeister. Additionally, since Capstone and PACE SEMI began collaborating in 2016, PACE SEMI's overall risk score has risen from 2.417 to 2.871.

While compliance, increased revenue, and risk scores are

important, these components are not the only reasons PACE SEMI continues to work with Capstone. Burmeister credits Capstone's customer service as a unique market differentiator and points to Jan Deyber, CRN-C, CSL, a client service liaison, as an example. "I can send an email to Jan Deyber in the morning asking for a meeting and could literally have a Zoom meeting set up with her that afternoon."

## The Conclusion

"Capstone is worth every penny," said Burmeister. "Being the CFO, I was skeptical at first, but once the increased risk score, more accurate documentation, and increased revenue were realized, I was sold. And once I really realized how unbelievable their customer service is, well that was just the cherry on top."



**Jeff Burmeister**  
Chief Administrative  
Officer and Chief Financial  
Officer of PACE SEMI



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