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CFO, MARCH 2025, COLLECTED BY KLAS RESEARCH

Customer Experience Pillars:



Source: 2026 Best in KLAS Awards – Software and Services

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Partnering for Revenue Cycle Success

Like many health systems today, Springfield, Ill.-based Hospital Sisters Health System has been challenged by an increasingly difficult financial environment, spurred by growing payer and regulatory complexities.

It's an environment that has made many healthcare provider organizations pause to consider: Is our revenue cycle positioned to succeed in the future?

After conducting an end-to-end revenue cycle assessment in the spring of 2024, Hospital Sisters Health System had its answer.

"Our assessment confirmed that although we were doing some things really well, we dramatically needed to improve consistency and scalability as well as our use of advanced technology tools and best practices," says Damond Boatwright, FACHE, president/CEO.

As a multistate system with 14 hospitals in Illinois and Wisconsin spanning three markets, the organization also wanted to standardize its revenue cycle processes. To help meet these needs, in April 2025, Hospital Sisters Health System partnered with Ensemble for its end-to-end revenue cycle function. In Tennessee, Memphis-based Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare was grappling with similar challenges.

"With consistent margin pressures and with reimbursement just not keeping pace with the escalating cost of care, we recognized we needed to do something different," says

Monica Wharton, FACHE, the health system's executive vice president/COO. In August 2025, Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare decided to outsource its end-to-end revenue cycle operations to Ensemble.

Aiming for Improvement

In choosing to outsource, both health systems were seeking improvements in patient and staff experience and revenue cycle key performance indicators like improved net revenue yield, faster and fairer reimbursement from payers, and better overall clarity on their accounts receivable. Easing the billing process was one important area for both organizations.

"I wanted to make sure our billing interactions reflect the same compassion and respect for our patients that we provide clinically," Boatwright says.

Prior to its partnership with Ensemble, Hospital Sisters Health System patients spent an average of five to 10 minutes waiting on hold with the call center. As of January 2026, that time is now nine seconds. Similarly, call center wait times at Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare have decreased by 75% since its engagement with Ensemble. Both organizations have also moved the needle on important revenue cycle metrics that reflect their financial

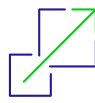
Why healthcare executives are looking for end-to-end RCM partners

Performance + cost gaps



Internal performance lags, costs are high or quick improvement requires additional resources.

Scalability



Rapid growth makes it difficult to effectively scale internal teams.

Technology access



Access to advanced technology (e.g., AI, automation) is too expensive to obtain on their own.

health. Over a five-month period, Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare has experienced \$20 million in cash acceleration and a 105.1% improvement in year-to-date cash collections and net revenue. Thanks to payer engagement strategies, the health system also recovered \$9.1 million in its 30-to-60-day accounts receivable.

"Our AR days, which is extremely important, have been reduced to nine," Wharton says. The health system's initial denial rate has decreased by 7%.

Hospital Sisters Health System has seen similar improvements. It exceeded its cash collection goal by 106% and has experienced a 40% decrease in accounts receivable, which means more money coming in the door, according to Boatwright. The organization has also reduced its DNSP (discharged not submitted to payer) metric by one day, equaling an \$11 million average monthly increase of accelerated submission to payers.

Tips for a Smooth Revenue Cycle Partnership

Boatwright and Wharton share the following advice on what steps to take and what qualities to look for when selecting a revenue cycle partner.

Be clear on the why. "You must be clear on your why from the very beginning, and the decision should be grounded in the long-term sustainability of the organization, not short-term cost pressures alone," Boatwright says. Defining what success looks like is also important, according to Wharton. "It may look different for you than for the next organization," she says.

Align on values. "Look for shared accountability, cultural alignment and a proven track record of measurable improvement across diverse health systems, not just one market," Boatwright says. At Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare, aligning values became particularly important in the context of how the 861 associates that transitioned to Ensemble were treated. Those staff members are officially employed by Ensemble but work on-site at the health system as usual.

"Our health system has been around for 108 years," says Wharton. "Our reputation and how we treat our people is part of who we are. We wanted to make sure that as our associates transitioned to Ensemble, it would be a better experience for them."

The same is true at Hospital Sisters Health System, where nearly 750 people now officially work for Ensemble but remain on-site at HSHS' facilities.

"Even though some of our employees have a different employer, their badges still say, 'Hospital Sisters Health System,'" Boatwright says. "That means a lot so we can feel like one team."

Boatwright is proud to report that during the staff transition to Ensemble, the health system experienced a 94% retention rate. "We did not see a high exodus of staff," he says.

Emphasize transparency, communication and collaboration. Making sure the staff affected by the transition to an outsourced revenue cycle arrangement are fully kept in the loop via frequent, transparent communication is key. Hospital Sisters Health System had transition leaders from Ensemble at each of its hospitals making introductions to staff, holding Q&A sessions and being there with staff every step of the way. Both Wharton's and Boatwright's organizations also rely on shared performance goals that keep everyone jointly accountable and shared dashboards that promote collaboration and allow everyone to view the same single source of truth about their organizations' goals and financials.

Adopt a new mindset. Leaders might need to rethink how they view outsourcing, which can bring up negative connotations for some.

"Make sure you understand outsourcing isn't about giving up control," Wharton says. "It's really about gaining the expertise and scale necessary to thrive in a highly complex environment."

Boatwright adds that rethinking revenue cycle's role within the organization might also be required to succeed in today's financial climate.

"Think of revenue cycle as a strategic enabler, not just a financial or operational fix," he says. "When done well, it improves the patient experience, strengthens your financial performance and creates capacity to invest in care delivery, your community and other areas. This is what healthcare organizations will need to do to thrive in the future."