

Information Builders helps organizations transform data into business value. Our business intelligence, integration, and data integrity solutions enable smarter decisionmaking, strengthen customer relationships, and drive growth.

FirstCare Health Plans

Snapshot

Organization

Since 1985, FirstCare Health Plans has provided access to high-quality, affordable healthcare across North, West, and Central Texas.

Challenge

Reliance on two different claims systems and data warehouses, disparate reporting systems, and a dearth of KPIs for finance, in-patient care, sales, pharmacy, and other functional domains.

Strategy

Use WebFOCUS to create BI dashboards reflecting current claims volume, revenue, membership, expenses, medical loss ratios, and other important variables. Tie KPIs to annual goals. Enlist power users to create and run reports from ad hoc reporting environment.

Results

Dramatic improvements in claims processing efficiency that improve member services and boost provider retention.

Information Builders Solution

WebFOCUS, Visual Discovery, and Professional Services.



FirstCare Health Plans Uses WebFOCUS to Manage Rapidly Growing Business

A Multi-level View into the Key Financial and Operational Metrics of a Practice

FirstCare Health Plans recently used Information Builders' WebFOCUS business intelligence (BI) analytics environment to streamline its healthcare reporting systems to meet government guidelines. FirstCare found the process of implementing a new claims payment system to be daunting. The company relies on two different claims systems and two different data warehouses during the transition. This made it difficult for employees who needed visibility into the claims inventory to find out what has been processed, what is pending with the providers, and how these pending claims impact day-to-day business issues.

FirstCare Health Plans provides access to high-quality, affordable healthcare. Since 1985, the organization has been serving the healthcare coverage needs of member across North, West, and Central Texas. FirstCare offers a wide range of HMO, PPO, ASO, and ancillary products through a variety of programs, including small and large

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John Dowd
BI Architect
FirstCare Health Plans

employer plans; state, federal and teacher plans; government programs; new private market plans; and the health insurance marketplace.

“Our membership is growing with new plans for the Texas Health Insurance Exchange, increasing the volume of claims that require manual intervention,” says Lori Wheelless, director of BI at FirstCare Health Plans. “Rather than increase the internal staff members to support this growing workload, we prefer to come up with creative ways to move our inventory of pending claims through the system.”

FirstCare needed a robust set of business intelligence tools that let people mine information from a single source of truth. “We selected WebFOCUS for its unique guided ad hoc query and reporting capabilities,” continues Wheelless. “WebFOCUS is versatile and reports against all our data. That’s a big help during this transition as we teach our staff to create reports and access data in a self-service environment.”

FirstCare now has BI dashboards that reflect current claims volume, revenue, membership, expenses, medical loss ratios, and other important variables. The BI team also created key performance indicators (KPIs) that tie annual goals to revenue, membership, and administrative expenses. By incorporating goals into the dashboard gauges, managers can see how their departments are performing in relation to those goals. Red, yellow, and green indicators help them spot trends at a glance. An executive summary provides a high-level view broken down by department.

With WebFOCUS, FirstCare has increased the efficiency of claims processing and other internal activities, driving greater satisfaction and loyalty among members and providers.

A New Era of Analysis

Since acquiring WebFOCUS, Wheelless and other members of the BI team have focused on operational reporting for the health insurance arm of the company. They started by creating a claims inventory dashboard to track unanticipated issues such as claims not paying correctly or claims that are stuck in the system for some unforeseen reason. Every day, FirstCare migrates the claims that were processed in the old system and loads them into the data warehouse supporting the new system. Departmental leaders review these backlogged claims through a WebFOCUS dashboard.

All claims must be paid within a timely fashion. “However there are half a dozen different steps that can cause a claim to fall out of the payment process,” notes Wheelless. “Now these workers can click on a claim and drill through to see the details as necessary. They don’t have to log into another system or do additional research. They can see it all visually displayed through the dashboard.”

Another WebFOCUS dashboard allows employees to track claims from the time they leave the clearinghouse until they are put into the core payment systems. It includes a guided ad hoc, selfservice reporting environment so people can drill down into the details. “Anybody in the company who needs to mine the claims data can use this system,” Wheelless adds.

John Dowd, a BI architect at FirstCare Health Plans, developed the claims dashboard with some assistance from Information Builders Professional Services. “Information Builders helped me develop the guided ad hoc reporting environment,” he recalls. “The consultants also created a top.

ranked ad hoc reporting environment that lets people view and analyze top paying claims, top members, claim dollars, and other important metrics.”

Dowd used many WebFOCUS BI assets right out of the box, such as standard graphics, gauges, and drill downs, to create these analytic systems. “Based on my past experience with similar projects, WebFOCUS is very easy to use and implement,” he notes. “We accomplished a lot in a short period of time.”

Driving Efficiencies Based on Metrics

The BI team also developed metric dashboards that display KPIs from each department such as claims, finance, in-patient care, pharmacy, and sales. “For example, the sales department wants to stay abreast of membership numbers,” Wheelless explains. “Finance wants to track monthly revenue, view a breakdown of medical loss ratios, monitor pharmacy payments, and tally up administration fees and expenses.”

A business analyst helped Dowd define the data elements and suggest how these metrics might be visually represented. “WebFOCUS makes it easy to connect new data elements to the existing BI environment,” he notes. “I have worked with other BI tools that are very cumbersome by comparison. I was pleasantly surprised with how easy it is to connect WebFOCUS to a database and deploy new BI functionality to users. That’s a testament to its basic reporting architecture and the way it was set up.”

Wheelless and her team are enlisting power users from key functional areas of FirstCare to run reports about overall membership, medical loss ratios, total revenue, internal claims processing, claims holds, and other important variables. “Our users are very enthusiastic about these KPIs because they have not been able to get their hands on this information before,” she says.

A Dramatic Improvement in Claims Processing Efficiency

According to Wheelless, at the outset of the BI project, FirstCare had a pending inventory of 80,000 claims. After automating its claims reporting process, it reduced that number to 6,000. “In addition, our adjusted inventory was more than 60,000 appeals from providers, generally for claims that they felt had not been paid correctly,” she says. “We got that down to close to 10,000. Dealing with these backlogs improves retention and satisfaction among the provider network.”

FirstCare also entered the Texas Health Insurance Exchange. This is where data analysis becomes especially important. Under the Affordable Care Act, health plans must offer coverage to all applicants irrespective of preexisting health conditions. As new members join the health plan with looming chronic health issues, FirstCare will recommend preventive services and track claims related to these conditions. “Carefully tracking complex cases should serve to lower the number of bed days and reduce hospitalization costs,” Wheelless says.

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Lori Wheelless

Director of BI
FirstCare Health Plans

Find Out More

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As the user community gains self-sufficiency, the BI team finds itself responding to fewer requests for ad hoc reports. This frees up team members to work on new types of projects. They are gradually migrating away from Crystal Reports and using WebFOCUS wherever possible. Reports and data that were previously gathered from disparate areas have been brought together into one cohesive view.

BI Roadmap: Mobility, Data Visualization, and Predictive Analytics

Going forward, FirstCare's BI roadmap includes new levels of data visualization with WebFOCUS Visual Discovery. Wheelless and her team are beginning work on mobile BI apps based on WebFOCUS Mobile Favorites that will enable field reps to display reports and dashboards on their Android and iOS tablets. Customer service personnel will enjoy a new "member super screen" that displays everything about each member including current and previous providers, claims history, authorizations history, prescription history, and outstanding requests from customer service.

While enhancements to date have focused on the health insurance arm of the company, FirstCare plans to create business intelligence applications and data for the provider arm of the company as well.