

An RVU for you: Creating and Implementing a Time-based Productivity Metric

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BACKGROUND

- In healthcare, productivity is of paramount importance. While provider services are incredibly diverse, a single metric has emerged for quantifying output: the Relative Value Unit (RVU).
- For years, our practice has acknowledged that the RVU system does not fully recognize every individual's contribution to our success.
- The traditional RVU system does not accurately assess the work required for many exam types. It also disregards vital non-RVU contributions (NRCs), such as tumor boards, exam protocoling, teaching, and administrative work.
- Our group developed a new system for tracking productivity as an alternative to the RVU system, named the Internal Value Unit (IVU) system.
- Whether preparing for a tumor board or reading a diagnostic study, there is an average amount of time we could assign to that activity to create fair value.
- We describe the development of the IVU system utilizing time spent as the universal currency.
- We present a novel approach to assigning value to the services performed by radiologists and the impact that this model has had on individual productivity, practice productivity, and individual job satisfaction.

METHOD

- After implementation, we surveyed our group's radiologists to gather feedback on the IVU system.
- The number of IVUs for each shift for each radiologist were collected for the year following implementation of the program.
- The monthly shift IVU averages were computed and plotted demonstrating an improvement in average performance.

RESULTS

- In addition to gains in radiologist satisfaction, our data analysis demonstrated significant productivity increase. The average shift productivity per provider showed improvements in multiple metrics, including IVU without NRCs (+7.6%), IVU with NRCs (+9.2%), and RVU (+3.8%).
- The survey responses indicated that most of the group's radiologists were more satisfied with the IVU system than the RVU system.
- Although a majority of the radiologists did not feel that the IVU system increased their productivity, our objective data indicated that there was an increase.

CONCLUSION

- Our study showed that the majority of the radiologists in our group preferred a time-based productivity metric as an alternative to the traditional RVU system.
- By presenting our methodology and experience, we hope that this novel approach can be reproduced by other groups resulting in similar benefits.

IVU System

