



Gaining Efficiencies and Reducing Costs in Member Enrollment

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Introduction

Healthcare organizations face the challenge of delivering better patient care while at the same time reducing costs. For health plans, servicing members is a critical business process in which even small improvements can go a long way toward meeting that challenge. Member enrollment, the first step in member service, is a critical business step that is often beset by an abundant paper trail and a complex workflow with a number of manual steps. As a result, this process is often frustrating for the prospective member and time consuming and costly for the health plan.

Business Process Management (BPM) and workflow technology can mitigate these challenges by automating manual steps, pushing information when and where it is needed and managing communication and decision-making. This white paper discusses some of the pitfalls of paper-based approaches and the benefits of automating the membership enrollment process with the use of BPM software.

The Inherent Problems of Paper-Based Processes

Paper-based approaches to processes such as membership enrollment have many problems associated with them, including:

- Lack of real-time validation to ensure that data is entered correctly and that all required information has been captured on the paper forms
- Inadequate audit trail to track actions taken
- Inefficient use of staff – often more time is spent looking for the information than acting on readily available data
- Considerable effort spent by numerous staff to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations
- Difficulty in adapting to the constantly changing rules and regulations and educating employees regarding the nuances of the changes
- Long turnaround time between the submission of an application and its approval

The Solution

To simplify and automate the member enrollment process for healthcare organizations, Project Performance Corporation (PPC) has developed a BPM-based solution – Enrollment 360[™]. This solution provides the visibility, traceability, organizational agility, and policy enforcement needed to in today's healthcare environment.

A Case Study

An excellent example of the benefits offered by Enrollment 360[™] can be seen through a hypothetical case study of the transformation of a statewide healthcare initiative that includes a variety of social healthcare programs, including Medicaid, Children's Medicaid, Family Health Plus, Child Health Plus, Prenatal Care Assistance Program, and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutritional program.



These programs have eligibility rules that include income, age, family size, and residency. In addition, the programs require documentation that must be submitted with the application.

The BPM solution accelerator, Enrollment 360™, using the Appian BPM Suite, could transform this statewide healthcare enrollment program from an error prone and tedious paper-based manual system to a simpler, more efficient, and less costly electronic enrollment process that is predictive and personalized to the unique needs of the participants.

The solution implements process rules that help guide a user through the application process and provide for uploading of the appropriate documentation to support their application. As seen in Figure 1, Enrollment 360™ has a routing algorithm that guides the flow of an enrollment instance to the right activity. At any given time, a process administrator could monitor the status of an enrollment process and access real-time information regarding when the enrollment was started, to whom an instance was assigned, and the process path taken by the instance. If needed, business rules could be changed on the fly to fit a particular instance.

As shown in Figure 2, users are provided with rich, user friendly, graphical interfaces that make use of the latest Web 2.0 technologies, such as AJAX. Verification and validity rules can be added to the online forms to ensure that the correct values are entered. These rules help to eliminate many of the data entry errors associated with paper-based systems. The BPM tools also have excellent reporting capabilities that can be easily defined by the system. Figure 3 shows a dashboard displaying key metrics of the enrollment process.

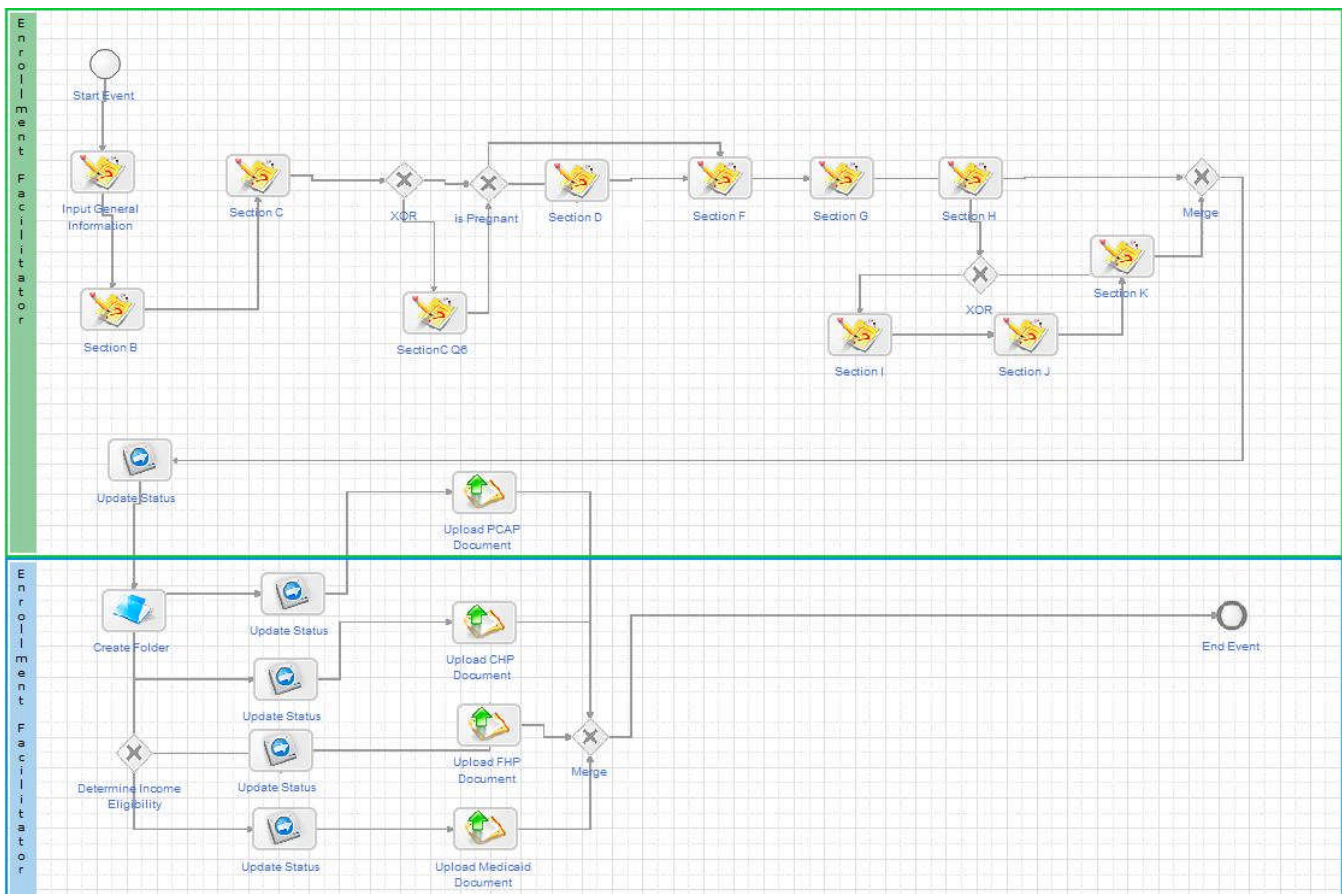


Figure 1 – Overview of the enrollment process



Input General Information

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Show task info ▾ Attachments and Notes (0)

General Information
Please complete the form below.

Contact Information

*First Name <input type="text"/>	Last Name <input type="text"/>
Middle Initial <input type="text"/>	Daytime Phone Number <input type="text"/>
Primary Language Spoken <input type="text"/>	Evening Phone Number <input type="text"/>
Primary Language Read <input type="text"/>	State of Residence <input type="text"/>
Apt# <input type="text"/>	County <input type="text"/>
Street <input type="text"/>	

Household Information

Are you Single? <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Gender <input checked="" type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
Number of children between 19 - 21 <input type="text"/> <small>How many children do you have living with you that are between the ages of 19 and 21?</small>	Number of children under 19 <input type="text"/> <small>How many children do you have living with you that are under the age of 19?</small>
Number of children under 5 <input type="text"/>	Total Family Size <input type="text"/> <small>Total Family Size</small>
Monthly Income <input type="text"/> <small>What is your monthly income?</small>	

Figure 2 – Sample enrollment form

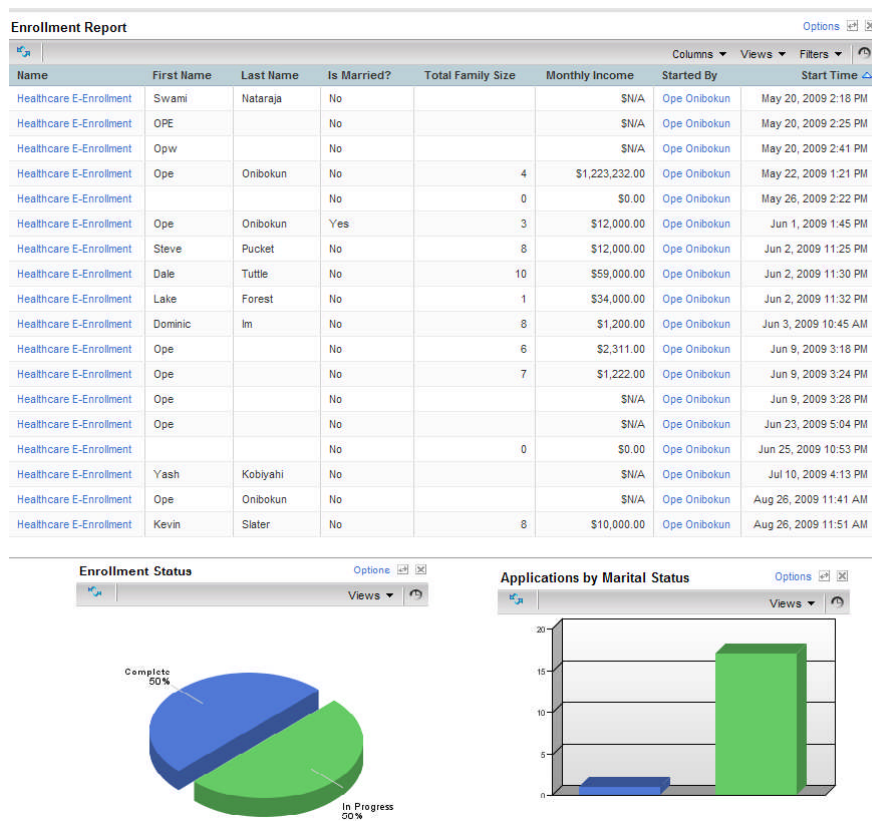


Figure 3 - Dashboard showing key metrics



The Benefits of Enrollment 360[™]

The implementation of the Enrollment 360[™] solution using workflow technology would help automate the member enrollment process and offer significant benefits.

- Workflows would enhance communication channels and reduce costs by eliminating the need for staff to respond to routine phone calls from members inquiring about the status of their applications. Workflows automate communication by integrating with Interactive Voice Response Systems to provide the status of applications. Customer service staff would be free to address other customer care priorities.
- Building business rules creates checklists that would ensure that an application is complete and all required documentation, such as proof of identity, salary, etc., is submitted with the application form.
- Compliance to constantly changing rules and regulations would be simplified and time spent educating employees to the nuances of those changes would be reduced. Incorporating business rules using workflow software can reduce errors and consistently apply the rules without room for ambiguous interpretation.
- Enrollment 360[™] would generate metrics to track operational and administrative efficiencies over time. The dashboard function would offer a quick snapshot of key performance indicators, giving decision makers the information they need to identify and resolve any problems.
- An automated workflow solution would enable consistent compliance with the constantly changing federal and state regulations. There are often stiff penalties associated with the lack of compliance. Alerting mechanisms built into the software would notify employees of upcoming submission deadlines. Because information is readily available in electronic form, the time and effort required to manually compile data for reporting is eliminated.

Conclusion

To remain competitive in the marketplace, healthcare organizations must become more agile and employ efficient ways of restructuring processes to improving efficiencies and reduce costs. Enrollment 360[™] can help healthcare organizations automate their membership enrollment process and reduce enrollment costs in a variety of ways.

- Customer service agents can be redeployed to provide customer care in ways other than answering phone calls related to member enrollment status
- Compliance with state and federal laws can be simplified with business rules and automated reminders and data reporting
- The number of days needed to process an application can be reduced
- Collecting the proper documentation will help ensure the right people have access to the right benefits
- Streamlined enrollment gets premiums flowing in sooner

BPM software can streamline and automate a variety of processes – the enrollment process is just one example. Contract management and credentialing are other process areas where BPM can play a significant role in increasing efficiency and reducing costs.



About Project Performance Corporation

Project Performance Corporation (PPC), part of the AEA group, is a management consulting firm integrating world leading expertise in the areas of environment and energy with cutting edge IT and global management. Our clients include Fortune 500 and top government decision makers.

We offer a unique blend of experience combined with our understanding of the customer, subject matter expertise, and information technology to devise customized solutions that deliver results. PPC offers a wide range of expertise for the healthcare industry, including:

- Business process management
- Complete healthcare analytics for episode of care (Episode 360[™])
- Business intelligence and data warehousing
- Master data management
- Portal solutions
- Knowledge management
- Enterprise security

To learn more about our services, visit us at www.ppc.com.

About the Author

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