CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

BHI Claims Data is Helping Concert Genetics Connect a Much-Needed Genetic Health Information Network

Claims data from Blue Health Intelligence® (BHI®), combined with genetic test data and organizational taxonomy, enabled Concert Genetics to refine tools that will allow the growing genetic test market to expand and gain greater credibility.

Background

The U.S. healthcare system does not have uniform standards or mechanisms for sharing genetic testing data. Ordering, collecting, storing, and billing for genetic tests should be as easy to perform as any other diagnostic test or procedure. Unfortunately, genetic health information is still stuck in the fax and paper era.

Various stakeholders in genetic testing — payers, providers, testing labs, and test makers — are pushing paper because no comprehensive digital network exists for genetic health information. Concert Genetics in Nashville, Tennessee, has aimed to change that by providing the infrastructure necessary to connect genetic health information and enable precision medicine.

Challenge: Erratic Genetic Test Billing

Because of a lack of payment standards, insurers are paying wildly different rates for genetic testing. Labs are billing insurance on an ad-hoc basis, unsure of how to receive payments appropriately and consistently. Plans are receiving claims from labs that charge different prices and using different combinations of codes for the same test.

"If you're a health plan and your job is to be a steward of scarce resources, you need to know a fair market value," said Rob Metcalf, CEO of Concert Genetics.

Robust markets need price transparency. Concert Genetics wanted to help health plans know what they are paying for, and to help labs know what they will be paid. For nearly a decade, the company had been collecting data on every genetic test ever used in the United States. But to know how the market utilized and valued those tests, they needed claims data.

Solution: Establishing New Standards

Concert Genetics chose to work with BHI to access a national repository of de-identified claims data needed to help its customers assess genetic test utilization and fast-track innovation.

In 2019, Concert Genetics was awarded a patent for its machine-learning process that identifies tests in claims data by matching the data attributes of the claims with the broad market of individual tests currently available.[1] It relies on three inputs:

- Concert Genetic's database of more than 50,000 unique, orderable, genetic tests.
- A multi-level taxonomy for organizing tests into clinically comparable categories and domains.
- BHI's conformed data repository of more than 20 billion medical and pharmacy claims.

Concert accessed a database with tens of millions of commercially insured lives from all 50 states; the claims database, provided by BHI, yielded 2.2 million genetic testing claims from the years 2016 to 2018.

"BHI data, combined with our data, yielded insights that a plan can use to understand their spending and where their members are utilizing genetic tests," Metcalf said.

The study indicated that multi-code claims were prevalent across genetic testing; some claims contained hundreds of codes. Code combinations for similar tests varied widely. More than 36,000 unique code combinations were observed across more than 30 domains. Reimbursements within these domains studied by Concert Genetics showed cost variations between $90 and more than $2,000.

Results

Price Transparency

Using these study results, Concert Genetics created quartiles of code combinations and allowed reimbursement amounts, providing health plans and labs with standard pricing benchmarks for specific genetic tests. Insurers are using the information to ease the administrative burden associated with managing testing benefits, and labs are using the information to know what code combinations are acceptable to bill for the genetic tests.

Utilizing claims data that replicated the entire U.S. market was critical to creating trustworthy benchmarks. Claims data from BHI provided Concert Genetics the actual claims experience of health plans, their members, and the labs from which the plans received claims.

Coding Consistency

In addition to pricing data, Concert Genetics developed an application that recommends a specific billing code or combination of codes to consistently represent a specific test. When both parties agree to use this data, a lab no longer needs to guess what codes are appropriate and a health plan does not need to guess at fair reimbursement. The result is a more predictable, transparent, and efficient transaction – one that requires less manual work for all parties involved.

Trend Discovery

The demand for genetic testing is dynamic and difficult for payers to discern. Using BHI's claims data along with its own data, Concert Genetics watches trends and helps payers adapt their policies and procedures to the changing landscape.

"Knowing what areas of testing have growing utilization and higher variability in coding and reimbursement enables us to help our customers prioritize their management efforts," said Nick Tazik, Concert Genetics' Vice President of Growth.

What's Next For Genetic Testing

Combining its genomic data with de-identified claims data from BHI has helped Concert Genetics shine a bright light on unnecessary coding variations and price disparities. Now, the market needs to digest that information and adopt new strategies to improve coding, reduce provider abrasion, and realize the benefits of a more efficient market for genetic testing.

Concert Genetics will continue to do all it can to make the genetic health information network easier, faster, and more usable. The company's partnership with BHI is a vital part of its plans.

[1] Patent No. 10,223,501, Tracking, Monitoring, and Standardizing Molecular and Diagnostic Testing Products and Services. Issued March 5, 2019.

STUDY FUNDAMENTALS

TRANSLATING TRANSPARENCY
Concert Genetics created coding standards and transparency tools that helped labs and health plans agree on fair pricing.

CREATING CONSISTENCY
BHI's claims data gave Concert Genetics the ability to uncover coding variability and enhance its software and data platform.

POWERING AUTOMATION
Linking coding and pricing data to policy and other criteria enabled claim edits and other automation to ensure appropriate payment.

"BHI offered a strong, robust set of claims data that we used to operate at a granular level. BHI has core data elements that are important to us: a reliable, substantial set of claims data, uniquely tied to provider IDs."

Rob Metcalf
CEO, Concert Genetics

Want to learn how health data and analytics can power real-world evidence? Contact BHI today to discuss real-world data, linking, and partnership opportunities.

Visit bluehealthintelligence.com or email info@bluehealthintelligence.com.