

# No Copay No Way: Improving Payment Compliance Through Smarter Communication At Bridgewell

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## INTRODUCTION

The Sovner Center is an outpatient behavioral health clinic within Bridgewell that provides psychiatric and therapeutic services to a diverse patient population. Like many outpatient healthcare settings, the center faces challenges with incomplete copayment collection, which can negatively impact financial stability and administrative efficiency. Barriers such as limited patient understanding of insurance, lack of cost transparency, and inconsistent collection workflows contribute to missed copayments. Addressing these challenges requires targeted administrative and communication-based interventions.

## OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this project was to implement and evaluate workflow and communication strategies aimed at increasing copayment completion rates and reducing outstanding patient balances at the Sovner Center.

## RELATED LITERATURE

- "These cost-shifting programs have created new barriers that patients and the care team must navigate to ensure timely access to treatment." (Choi et al., 2024, p. 884)
- "Patients are often confused by this process as the details were not made clear when they originally enrolled in their health plan. This multistep process can take months, and patients may ultimately be forced to switch to an alternate medication entirely (if available) or forgo treatment owing to the complexity and burden of this process." (Choi et al., 2024, p. 890)
- "Prioritizing the collection of copays and deductibles at the time of service is the most cost-effective way to secure revenue..." (Amoroso, 2025, p. 2)
- "When letting the patients know about their appointments, it is also worth mentioning to them the copay or coinsurance that they are expected to pay for the appointment. This helps the patient come better prepared to make the payment." (Banka, n.d., p. 3)
- "The video conferencing aspect of telehealth software is actually the easiest part. It is much harder to design a solution that integrates into and supports the clinical and administrative workflows." (Milaster, 2022, p. 5)

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Enhanced Communication
  - Added copayment reminders during every phone call and email with clients
  - Clearly stated payment responsibility prior to appointments
2. Digital Accessibility Improvements
  - Added the copayment link to email footers, the top of pdfs for Zoom meetings, and into the Zoom waiting rooms
  - This made payment access immediate and convenient
3. Standardized Workflow
  - Encouraged copay collection during client check-ins
  - Integrated reminder calls into daily administrative routines
4. Patient Education
  - Provided clear explanations of copayments, insurance responsibility, and how to use Bridgewell's copayment website
  - Simplified financial information during patient interactions
5. Unpaid Balance Tracking System
  - Created and maintained a list of clients with outstanding balances
  - Regularly reviewed to improve visibility and accountability
6. Follow-up Integration
  - Incorporated reminder calls into daily workflow
  - Routinely contacted patients with unpaid balances

## RESULTS

After implementing these intervention strategies, increased client awareness of copay responsibilities, improved accessibility to payment options, a reduction in missed copayments, more consistent follow-up on unpaid balances, and an improved staff workflow efficiency regarding copayments were observed. The implementation demonstrated that small workflow and communication changes can significantly impact financial outcomes

### Copayment Collection:

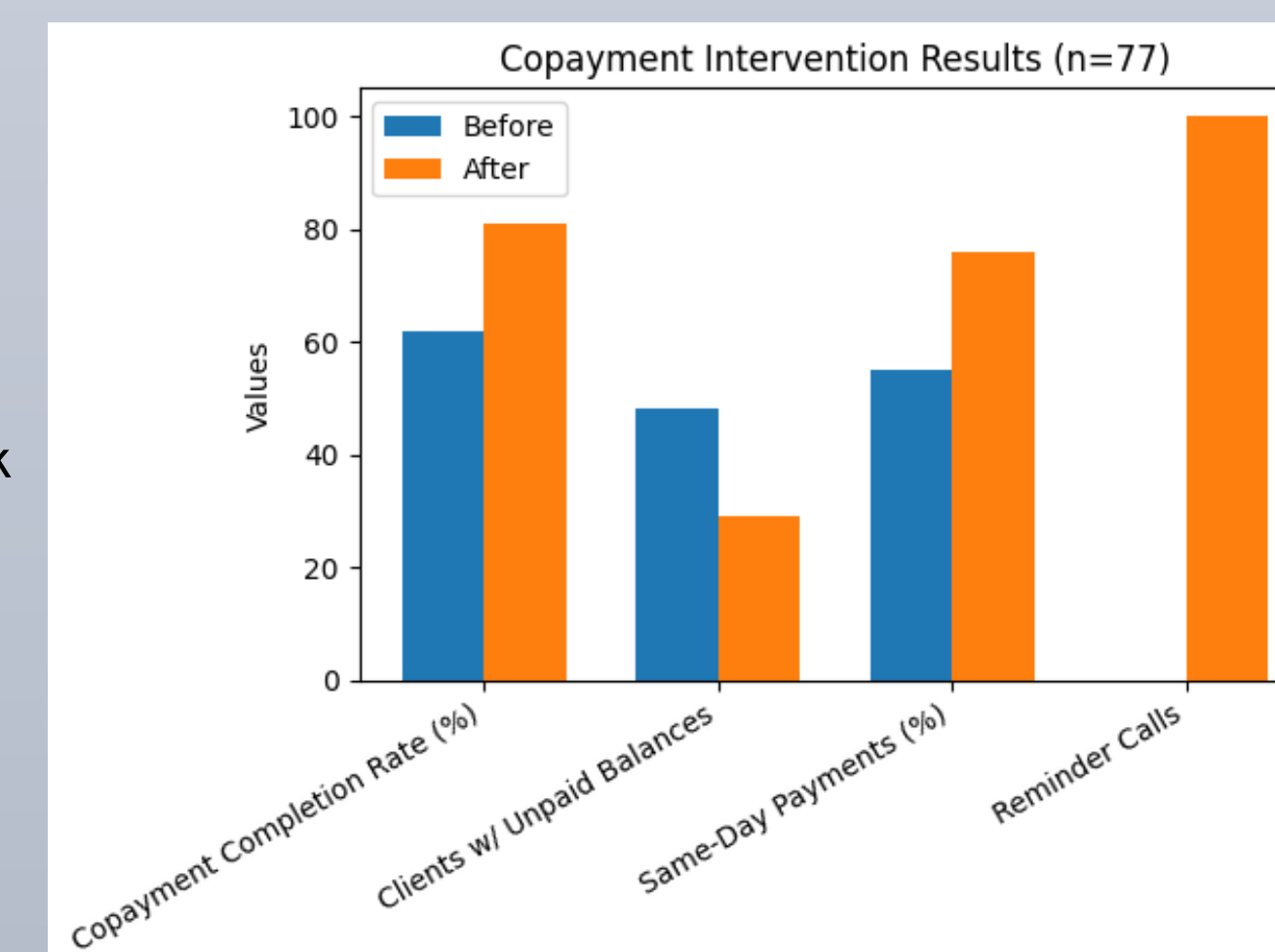
- Using a sample of clients, estimated copayment completion rates increased from 62% to 81%
- Outstanding balances decreased from 48 clients to 29 clients
- Same-day copayment completion improved from 55% to 76%

### Patient Follow-up:

- Reminder calls regarding outstanding balances increased from 0 a week to 77 a week
- Email reminders were added consistently to all client communications
- More clients completed payments after receiving multiple reminders

### Workflow Efficiency:

- Staff reported fewer missed opportunities to collect copayments
- Tracking unpaid balances improved organization and accountability
- Embedding payment links into emails, PDFs, and Zoom waiting rooms increased accessibility



## CONCLUSIONS

Improving copayment completion does not require major system overhauls. To significantly improve outcomes it requires...

- Consistent communication
- Easy access to payment tools
- Structured follow-up systems

This project highlights the importance of administrative strategy in healthcare management, particularly in balancing patient care with financial sustainability. It also strengthens revenue cycle management by improving copayment collection and reducing lost revenue and decreases administrative burden through more efficient workflows and less follow-up on unpaid balances. Additionally, it enhances patient transparency by clearly communicating financial responsibilities and can be easily scaled across other outpatient settings.

## REFERENCES

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