OVERVIEW

EmblemHealth is a major health maintenance organization and health insurance company based in New York, NY, providing affordable, quality health care coverage and administrative services to approximately 2.8 million people and access to physicians and hospitals across all 50 states. EmblemHealth was formed in 2006 through the merger of two legacy companies, Group Health Incorporated (GHI) and HIP Health Plan of New York (HIP).

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

According to Gerald Edwards, director of content management at EmblemHealth, the merger provided significant opportunities to streamline the company’s processes for distributing written communications to its members.

As a longtime user of EMC® Document Sciences® solutions, the HIP organization had previously operated a facility in Florida to handle printing, assembly, and distribution of customer-facing materials. By consolidating all printing functions in New York, EmblemHealth hoped to improve accuracy, raise service levels, reduce mailing costs, and leverage economies of scale.

The company sought to create a seamless document assembly process that would automate data feeds and extract-transform-and-load (ETL) processes, and support a gradual movement to paperless communications.

“In healthcare, being able to get materials to our members and providers in a timely manner is of the utmost importance, but we must be able to do so in a manner that complies with federal privacy regulations,” says Edwards. “The merger enabled us to consolidate best-of-breed solutions from both companies, and we saw big potential for expanding and upgrading the Document Sciences installation to better serve our members and support the entire organization.”

SOLUTION

EmblemHealth has upgraded its newly consolidated document assembly infrastructure to EMC Document Sciences xPression® Enterprise Edition—a suite of software tools for automating the creation of highly customized and personally relevant customer communications for multichannel delivery.
Running in the IBM WebSphere environment, the xPression suite includes xPresso® for Adobe Dreamweaver, which enables EmblemHealth designers to create graphically rich document templates with a consistent look that can be applied across all divisions for electronic distribution.

In addition, EmblemHealth is currently implementing the xTest tool to automate the testing of document output. With xPression xDesign, EmblemHealth staff can quickly create regulated documents with rules for customization and personalization. The xRevise tool provides a rich environment for customer service personnel to create ad hoc correspondence, such as one-off letters to members.

A COMPLIANT AND EFFICIENT DOCUMENT FACTORY

At EmblemHealth, xPression provides an enterprise platform for generating customer-facing materials such as contracts, correspondence, explanations of benefits, and summaries of benefits. As such, the system touches every department involved in producing, reviewing, approving, and distributing these materials—including legal and regulatory affairs, customer service, member outreach, external communications, and public affairs.

Using xPression’s web-based tools, EmblemHealth has created automated workflows for compliant assembly, approval, and release of both paper and electronic documents to healthcare consumers and providers alike.

“Seamless communications are highly important in healthcare delivery, and xPression has given us a foundation on which to continue serving our members as our operation adapts to a rapidly changing market and regulatory landscape.”

Gerald Edwards
Director of Content Management at EmblemHealth

In the place of former manual processes that were slow and inefficient, these automated workflows enable content owners and business partners to submit document components electronically. Documents are automatically moved through a review and approval workflow.

Because of the resulting time savings and new efficiencies, EmblemHealth has been able to increase the number of production jobs running in the xPression platform to 92, from only about 12 in the previous environment. This represents an increase in volume from around 300,000 page impressions per month to about 1.5 million impressions per month currently.

PAPERLESS WORKFLOWS YIELD HUGE SAVINGS

The xPression environment is projected to deliver yearly savings of $2 million, simply through replacing time-consuming and inefficient document generation processes. In less than a year, about 16 percent of the EmblemHealth membership has opted to receive electronic communications, a number that is growing rapidly.
"Because of patient privacy regulations, the healthcare business traditionally has not lent itself to paperless communications—especially via email," says Edwards. "But, with xPression, we’ve created a secure environment for electronic fulfillment that is not only compliant, but provides an efficient means of reaching thousands of our members that have chosen to receive materials via email."

The focal point of the EmblemHealth member communications system is a secure web portal that utilizes the web services component of xPression to create a “message center” for each member opting into the paperless program.

Using xDesign, the company’s designers have created email templates that are populated with text customized to individual members, directing them via custom URLs to their specific documents. For a summary of benefits, for example, clicking on the URL generates a web service call to xPression, which dynamically assembles the document based on the specific member’s contracted set of benefits. In addition to members, the portal has distinct areas for healthcare providers and brokers for delivery of tailored contracts, schedules, and riders.

**STAYING AHEAD OF CHANGING REGULATIONS**

As new regulations in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) begin to take effect, EmblemHealth is relying on xPression to adapt its operations smoothly and cost effectively. One recent example was the Sept. 23, 2012 deadline for healthcare insurers to provide a standardized Summary of Benefits and Coverage (SBC) to all individuals enrolling in medical coverage. Since most of EmblemHealth’s benefit information is stored in legacy mainframe systems that date back to the 1980s, the data required for the SBC was not readily available.

With xPression web services, EmblemHealth built a set of templates that could automatically extract the benefits data and present it according to the Department of Health and Human Services’ strict guidelines for text and formatting.

“This was a very challenging project that required a significant transformation of our data into the standardized input format,” says Edwards. “We could not have met the September deadline without the automated workflows in xPression.”

In addition, EmblemHealth is gearing up for compliance with another reform enacted by the PPACA, the creation of state-run healthcare exchanges that will enable consumers to shop for insurance.

“Although we don’t yet know what form New York’s exchange will take, we’re anticipating that it will be multi-tiered and will require us to present the products in a standardized, simplified manner,” says Edwards. “It’s an ideal use case for xPression.”

**A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE**

The migration to xPression at EmblemHealth has ushered in a new age of electronic communication and automated document workflows that are not only delivering tremendous savings and efficiencies, but helping the company adapt smoothly to a rapidly changing regulatory environment.
"Through the years, EMC has done an excellent job of adapting the xPression product to serve a world that was once dependent on batch printing to the new world of electronic distribution," says Edwards. "Seamless communications are highly important in healthcare delivery, and xPression has given us a foundation on which to continue serving our members as our operation adapts to a rapidly changing market and regulatory landscape."