



**CAREN PUVALOWSKI, CHFP**  
*Lead Consultant, Critical Access Hospital (CAH)*

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As the Service Line Leader in our Critical Access Hospital/Rural Health Division, Caren offers our clients over twenty-five years of Critical Access Hospital (CAH) and other Rural Hospital financial, accounting, revenue cycle and reimbursement experience. She has worked in a variety of roles in the finance departments of CAHs, including multiple years as a Chief Financial Officer. Caren's prior provider experience and hands-on knowledge of the issues impacting rural hospitals allows her to identify both present and future reimbursement and payment opportunities.

Caren's broad experience in multiple facilities has included ensuring that they optimize their payments under their CAH and rural designations. Areas of focus have included financial, reimbursement, cash flow analysis, pro-forma scenarios, accounting, general ledger, financial statements, contractual allowance, contract management and negotiations, operational efficiency, and revenue cycle analysis. Caren brings these areas of focus to effectively assist our clients. Her accomplishments include:

- Successful application submission and conversion of a hospital to CAH status, as well as several clinics to Rural Health Clinic status.
- Lead multiple CAH cost report review engagements that resulted in increased Medicare reimbursement of over 1 million dollars. CAH engagements ranged from solo facilities to system owned CAHs.
- Negotiation and coordination of payer contracts, including those for a new retail pharmacy and CAH Medicare Managed Care contracts resulting in additional reimbursement.
- Work with a number of health systems to implement strategies for optimizing the opportunities of their rural hospitals.
- Assisted clients in implementing a line of credit to provide for a steadier and predictable cash flow.
- As CFO for a CAH, consistently established a culture related to overall financial performance and worked as a leader to sustain a fully operational community hospital.
- Lead cross functional teams focused on various initiatives including the reduction of lost revenue, risk management, internal policies, risk of claims and other revenue cycle related areas.
- Key role in development of community support and fundraising activities in an effort to ensure that the hospital remained open and solvent. Activities exceeded the identified goal.
- Lead role in the implementation of a new financial system while enhancing processes to increase charge capture, reduce claim errors and improve accuracy. Experience with a number of financial and EHR systems, including Dairyland/Healthland, Rollins, Tech Time/MedWorxs, HMS, Epic, athena and CPSI
- Conducted multiple employee, board, HFMA, Hospital Association and Rural Health presentations, as well as annual open hospital community meetings.

Caren earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Saginaw Valley State University, majoring in Finance. She is a member of the Great Lakes Chapter of Healthcare Financial Management Association and has achieved the status of Certified Healthcare Financial Professional. In addition, she completed the World Class Customer Service with Innovation course through Dale Carnegie.

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