

**North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
2005 Ralph W. Ketner Employee Productivity Awards Application**

County:	Gaston	Employee:	Selenna Moss	Email:	smoss@co.gaston.nc.us
County Department:	Health	Employee Title:	Business Services Admin.		
County Phone:	704-853-5271	County Address:	Mailing	991 W. Hudson Blvd., Gastonia, NC 28052	
Is this project being submitted on behalf of two or more employees?				No	Yes X

If yes, please provide below a listing of all project employees in Number 6. Employee & title as listed above should be for lead team member.

Fair Labors Standards Act Designation: In order for your project to be eligible, you MUST indicate one of the following. If you do not know, please contact your personnel director

EXEMPT: **NON-EXEMPT:** **BOTH (if applicable to team):**X

1.	Productivity Improvement Title:	Patient Accounts Collection "Re-vamp"
2.	Implementation Date (must be between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2005)	February 1, 2005
3.	Please describe the productivity improvement. (Please limit response to these 2 pages.)	
A collaborative effort between our Business Services Division and IT allowed the completion of a project to "revamp" our collections process for patient accounts in order to maximize revenue that would otherwise not be captured. The overall goals of this project were to reduce aged accounts for self pay patients and to improve efficiency of our collections process without adding additional staff.		
In collaboration with our IT Department we were able to implement a fully electronic collections program which integrated with our current system to capture individuals who fell under specific criteria in order to place the individual in a "collections" status and allow the system to generate a collection letter to the individual. This greatly reduced the amount of staff required to work these accounts and allowed them to work on other projects in addition to greatly improving the flow process of collection accounts as staff were able to easily pull up the information needed to address questions to clients regarding the account status. In addition, we worked with our IT staff in order to integrate the newly implemented collections program with the State's Tax Debt Setoff Program. With the assistance of our IT staff we were able to create a file that met certain criteria to automatically be sent to the State for participation in the State Tax Debt Setoff Program.		
Through this process, patient accounts personnel were trained on how to properly handle public inquiries relating to collections and were able to fully inform patients of the process and ways in which they could prevent their account from being placed in "collections" and/or submitted for Tax Debt Setoff. This allowed for a more informed and educated staff as well as a more informed patient. With this process in place we were able to re-align the duties within our Patient Accounts Department to avoid the need to add additional staff.		

4. Please describe why this project was initiated or what problem it addressed:

Gaston County Health Department had been experiencing a large increase in patient services with a 25% increase in our maternity services alone. With these increases our patient accounts staff were operating on overload and we needed to look at how we could improve processes in order to eliminate the need to add staff to accommodate for our growth. In this review it was noted that our expense and staff time for processing collections could be greatly reduced by automating this process. In addition, we felt that we could improve our collection rate for aged self pay accounts during the process which would assist in increasing our revenue and ultimately decrease the need for additional County funds. Staff within the Patient Accounts area had been working with the same number of staff for at least eight years, although this area had grown greatly in responsibility and the continual trend of the Health Department's growth in services would require the need of additional staff, we were able to avoid this by "revamping" our collection process. This allowed one full time staff person who was previously performing collections full time to reduce that time to only 10% and allow for the duties within that area to be re-aligned to better handle the growth experienced.

5. Please quantify the improvement's results in terms of cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of services provided. (Please indicate what resources were used to achieve your results, and what was done with the time savings, if any accrued).

We were able to eliminate the use of our outsourcing vendor for collections by implementing this process improvement. We were able to save \$49,634 (\$5.25 per account for outsourcing 9,454 accounts in collection) in County Funds by automating the collections process and eliminating the need to outsource. In addition we were able to further save the County app. \$30,000 by not having to add a full-time position to accommodate for the growth of services. We collected over \$29,400 from self pay patients who had been through our automated collections program as well as over \$18,000 in revenue from implementing the utilization of the State's Tax Debt Set Off program.

6. Please provide any other descriptive information you would like to be considered by the review committee.

Not only were we able to improve our internal processes, not request additional staff, and eliminate the need for outsourcing, we were able to save County funds and increase our collection of self pay accounts. Everyone worked hard to accomplish this program implementation and achieve a successful program under a great collaborative effort between our Business Services and IT staff.

Employees involved with and contributing to the project implementation:

Selenna Moss, Teresa Hardin, Robert Peterson, and Joe Will.

County Manager's Name: Jan Winters **Supervisor's Name:** Colleen Bridger