Clinical Pathology Laboratories, Inc. (CPL) has served the medical community for over sixty years. Over 1750 employees work at the 60,000 square foot main laboratory facility and at the remote laboratory operations located across the Southwest.

CPL has adopted a pathology-involved philosophical approach for each market served. That is, CPL is affiliated with over 150 pathologists throughout the Southwest. The CPL-affiliate pathologist strategy allows CPL to provide a seamless operation, offering clients “local” cytology/histology services combined with pathology directed clinical testing. CPL believes that it is better positioned to offer clients the cost efficiencies available through a large independent laboratory while sustaining the continuum of care of local pathology. CPL selected the current pathology affiliates based on proven leadership within their respective medical communities.

Automation has become a key factor for the success of clinical laboratories to help reduce errors and manual processes, as well as enhanced provider connectivity. Achieving this level of automation was on the top of the business and process improvement list for Clinical Pathology Laboratories, Inc. (CPL) in 2002.

The Challenge
Prior to 2002, CPL was struggling to get properly reimbursed from claims without having to invest heavy FTE man-power to retrieve missing information. In fact, in many cases, manual intervention did not result in proper billing. Its customer service workload was also burdened by a large number of phone calls from providers inquiring status of orders or missing reports. CPL needed a dual-purpose solution to help improve these internal and external processes.

The Solution
To address these problems head-on – reducing manual processes and resources – CPL implemented 4medica’s laboratory outreach solution. The solution provided simple and seamless integration with CPL’s internal systems, as well as bi-directional interfaces with its providers’ electronic medical record (EMR) and practice management systems (PMS). Thanks to 4medica’s quick implementation process, CPL started to see results right away.

4medica was also able to easily accommodate customization requests for CPL. CPL requested the ability for its Patient Service Center (PSC) staff to print specific information on patient demographics and insurance information for a patient to verify before the order is submitted. This specific workflow allowed CPL to cut down on the amount of errors on orders. 4medica’s client-specific configurability allowed for this to be done in a timely manner without any workarounds.

The Results
4medica’s proprietary, rules-driven web-based architecture for business and billing automation played a key role in reallocating internal resources. CPL was able to drastically reduce manual data entry errors and, as a result, also reduce the number of FTE resources needed to retrieve the missing information. Automating this process transformed the claims reimbursement process – expediting payments, reducing errors and boosting FTE productivity.

The clinical, workflow-driven rules within the system also helped eliminate front-end errors by provider sites. This, coupled with the user-friendly online solution, made it very simple and intuitive for providers to place orders and receive lab results. The providers were finally able to get a patient-centric view of lab data – from multiple labs – and incorporate that information into their internal systems. This not only helped to boost CPL’s provider satisfaction, but also reduce its reliance on customer service to check on lab information, since the information was now easily accessible online, in real time.

One added-benefit was the ability for CPL’s sales force to use its 4medica connectivity as an incentive for providers to use its services. This is because 4medica’s online platform allows providers to utilize the service for free, get set up on the system within a day, and easily place and retrieve orders.

Next Steps
CPL attributes its growth and cost savings over the past eight years, in part, to automating its organization through 4medica. Thanks to 4medica’s user-friendly, browser-based technology, seamless-integration, rapid deployment and minimal ongoing-maintenance, CPL has signed a three year contract extension with 4medica to continue to deliver a cost-effective laboratory outreach solution that demonstrates an impressive return-on-investment.