CASE STUDY

EHR Implementation: A Catalyst for Improved Operations

Michigan State University (MSU) HealthTeam’s disparate electronic health record (EHR) and practice management (PM) systems made the process of aligning provider practices and standardizing work flows onerous and overly-reliant on manual interventions. Given MSU HealthTeam’s size — more than 260 providers representing 30 specialties across 40 practice locations — manual and variable processes were both inefficient and unsustainable.
In early 2016, the organization elected to implement the athenaNet solution from athenahealth to manage the physician practice and ambulatory operations on a single platform. Shortly after the implementation process began in late spring, the HealthTeam recognized that it would require assistance to fully realize the benefits of the newly integrated platform, such as efficiencies in reporting, revenue cycle, practice operations, and clinical operations. MSU HealthTeam asked ECG to lead the athenaNet implementation, and to use the implementation as a catalyst to establish and institutionalize best practice-based standards as well as update the organizational model to effectively govern and support the use of the new system.

More Than Just Technology

- Reporting
- Revenue Cycle
- Practice Operations
- Clinical Operations

“...Our objective in implementing the athenaNet EHR was to use the conversion as an opportunity to align each of our clinical practices to common best practice work flows. Given the complexity of our organization, this was a significant objective to accomplish, in addition to the conversion to a new EHR. ECG was able to provide us with a path to achieve both objectives. Their expertise with the clinical, revenue cycle, and governance aspects of large ambulatory practices, as well as their knowledge of the athenaNet EHR, were extremely beneficial to us as we planned and successfully implemented athenaNet.”

RICHARD T. WARD
CEO
MSU HEALTHTeam
ECG executed the tandem processes of software implementation and operations transformation by:

- Designing an operations-centric approach to lead and manage all technical and process-related aspects of the project, engaging the HealthTeam’s executives, technologists, business owners, and key stakeholders.

- Instituting a framework used to collaboratively define and adopt future-state work flows designed to enhance operational performance and foster standardization.

While planning and executing implementation activities, ECG also supported communication and training efforts by:

- Developing a communication and change management plan focused on messaging athenaNet-related information and decisions to physicians and clinics.

- Creating policies and procedures to support updated work flows.

- Working with athenahealth to integrate redesigned work flows into end-user training.

- Supplementing the athenahealth training documentation by incorporating the organizational rationale for new policies, procedures, and work standards into training materials.

Additionally, ECG created a transition plan for MSU HealthTeam detailing how the organization could effectively optimize athenaNet and its work flows following the implementation. Upon completing all phases of the implementation, including planning, decision making, communication, configuration, and testing, ECG coordinated and supported end-user training and go-live.
In November 2016, MSU HealthTeam went live on athenaNet under the project name of MSUHealth. All MSU providers and clinics were converted to a single platform as intended within the planned timeframe. The sustained success of the MSUHealth project will be supported by the foundation ECG helped put in place, which is a dynamic, committee-supported, physician-led governance structure designed to support robust change control processes, prioritize strategic initiatives, set physician goals and objectives, and lead to wide adoption of the new system.

“During the athenaOne implementation at MSU, ECG took initiative on developing policies and procedures which served as the framework to enforce standardized work flows and the athenahealth table-build. This allowed our team to focus on the building, interface and work flow development, training, and go live support activities. Thanks to our mutual interest and extensive communication efforts, MSU was able to go-live on athenaOne in a very tight timeframe, making for a very happy client. We look forward to more successful partnerships with ECG in the future.”

MARY AMMER
ATHENAHEALTH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

For more ECG Case Studies, visit us at ecgmc.com/clients/case-studies