

RESULTS:

- EHR systems have positive effects on organizational performance, but their implementation is a complex undertaking, making it clear that implementation and support all need to be carefully considered during the EHR evaluation phase.
- Expert AHT implementation paves the way to greater efficiency and savings down the road.
- Training is one of the most important parts of AHT implementation. AHT ensures this is done onsite, face-to-face so its customers retain the knowledge and adopt the system faster and more effectively.

Tackling Successful EHR Implementation with American HealthTech

First Atlantic found just what they were searching for with American HealthTech's personal, onsite approach to implementation, support, and training which paved the way for greater savings and efficiencies throughout the organization.

As a local family business, First Atlantic is owned and managed by Mainers for Mainers. It maintains a network of facilities throughout the state so that Mainers can access care close to home. To better manage its facilities, First Atlantic centralized all of its accounts receivables, enabling its staff to develop expertise in handling complex claims quickly and accurately. Because of its successes, other facilities have requested its services, and First Atlantic serves these homes through its associated billing company, American Billing. In January 2015, First Atlantic received notice from its previous software vendor that they were retiring their system. This was significant because the vendor worked with most nursing homes in Maine. First Atlantic had only eight months to replace the software. The software vendor endorsed PCC as an alternative. But First Atlantic decided to deploy American HealthTech instead.

First Impression Was the Deciding Factor

First Atlantic underwent months of due diligence to vet new software options, from clinical to billing. Then, they met American HealthTech (AHT).

According to Tammy Roscia, Director of Accounts Receivables/Revenue Cycle for First Atlantic, "They came to our office, which impressed us because everyone else did a web-based meeting. They also really knew the system, so it wasn't just sales. I wanted my frontline staff to be able to ask a lot of questions. The AHT team handled their questions so well that my team walked away excited about changing software – and when does that ever happen?"

During its initial vetting process, First Atlantic also explained to the competing vendors that it was the first in Maine to have an EMAR, so it needed to work with a vendor that could extract data from its previous clinical package and import it into the new billing package.

- “AHT isn't a typical company. They're personable and available. Other vendors work behind closed doors without direct interaction.
- “One of the most helpful aspects of implementation was AHT's positive approach. They didn't approach it as classroom instruction. They made it very human, approaching it on a personal level as if they were working frontline with our billing team. They talked with them, not at them. This was instrumental in getting their buy-in and ensuring their successful usage of the EHR.

*--Tammy Roscia
Director of Accounts
Receivables/Revenue Cycle*

“This was hugely important for us,” said Wanda Pelkey, Chief Financial Officer for First Atlantic. “PCC said no, they couldn't do it; but AHT said yes, they could. They did custom work to interface with First Atlantic's current clinical package to get the data we needed. AHT has never said, ‘No, we're not doing that,’ or ‘No, we can't do that.’ They heard us out and delivered solutions.”

It became clear to First Atlantic that selecting the right solution goes well beyond just the software.

“We learned pretty quickly that selecting and implementing a new EHR takes real work, with real people working together. That means you need a partner willing to show up at the beginning, middle and end. AHT does that, and that's why we decided to move forward with them above all others.”

Implementation and Onsite Training

According to Wanda Pelkey, another important goal for First Atlantic was to have an onsite, personable approach to implementation and training. “We're big believers in having someone come and train our staff,” she explained. “We believe this makes a successful implementation. Other software vendors wouldn't send people onsite – it was all webinar-based after you read a bunch of documentation online. But who has time for that?”

Tammy Roscia concurs. “AHT isn't a typical company. They're personable and available. Other vendors work behind closed doors without direct interaction.”

“My goal is to never put the burden on our customers,” said Tom Turner, Senior Services Consultant with American HealthTech. “I want to make it easy and productive for them. The First Atlantic team was great to work with and willing to learn.”

The partnership between First Atlantic and AHT resulted in onboarding 18 facilities between the timeframe of February and August. During that time, AHT also trained staff across all 18 facilities while concurrently managing all aspects of implementation.

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