

Efficient and worry-free

Creating time-saving workflows, closing care gaps, and boosting provider and patient engagement with athenaOne® and Alliant Management Services

At a glance:

- Rural community hospital
- Serving northern Florida
- Affiliate of Alliant Management Services
- Partnered with Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare

Challenges

- Inefficient workflows
- High no-show rate
- No patient portal
- Limited ability to participate in quality programs
- Lack of consistent outreach to patients for preventive care

Solutions

- athenaOne®

Results

- Streamlined, integrated workflows
- Decreased days in accounts receivable to an average of less than one day
- Reduced no-show rate to almost zero
- Increased patient volume
- Improved time of collection rate
- Proactive outreach to patients and high rate of adoption of patient portal
- Successful participation in quality programs

Karen Tidwell, Director of Clinical Operations, and TJ Hempstead, Director of Clinical Practices have a strong working partnership at Doctors' Memorial Hospital (DMH). Both are longtime enthusiasts of athenaOne, a cloud-based suite of EHR, revenue cycle management, and patient engagement services, which complements the support they get from Alliant Management Services. These relationships have been a game-changer for the hospital's performance.

Advancing productivity and revenue with an integrated solution

Before partnering with athenahealth and Alliant, DMH had a high number of patient no-shows, inconsistent outreach, and limited participation in quality programs. Now, patients, providers and staff are highly engaged, the hospital has a robust quality management process, and workflows have tightened up considerably. In fact, their processes are so efficient that Hempstead says it's rare to see patients waiting in the lobby.

Tidwell's team regularly closes encounters and submits claims on the same day. "The front desk staff easily completes each claim before the patient walks out the door so the bill can drop that night," said Tidwell. DMH's 12-month average is less than one day in accounts receivable, well below the six-day average for organizations of similar size on the athenahealth network. In addition, Alliant completed a study to make improvements to patient charge capture.

On the clinical side, Hempstead reports that athenaClinicals, athenahealth's EHR solution, streamlines data entry for physicians so they can spend more face time with patients and finish documentation each day. "Our physicians are incredibly engaged and productive with the process we've put in place with athenaClinicals," said Hempstead. DMH physicians especially like being able to customize templates for different visit types. "Whether they're doing Medicare wellness exams or 12 upper-respiratory infection exams in a week, physicians can personalize their templates to keep the documentation process fast and accurate."

Because athenaOne is an integrated system, DMH can optimize billing and clinical practices. "It's absolutely important to have athena's practice management and EHR solutions working together," said Hempstead. "We empower our entire team to provide excellent care. athenaOne gives us a cohesive and worry-free way to deliver that care, no matter what role you are working in." Having nimble workflows helped Alliant incorporate new patient models for swing beds and wound care, introduce a 340B drug savings program, and assess emergency department operations at DMH. Equally important, Hempstead explained that athenaOne and Alliant help prevent unnecessary care. "If it's not clinically appropriate for a particular patient, and we're not going to get reimbursed for it, we're not going to do it," said Tidwell.

"athenaOne empowers our administrative and clinical teams to deliver excellent care, no matter what role they are working in. It's a simple, user-friendly platform that optimizes the patient visit all the way through."

TJ Hempstead, Director of Clinical Practices

Case Study | Doctors' Memorial Hospital

Effective patient outreach closes care gaps and reduces no-shows

Tidwell says that athenaCommunicator, athenaOne's patient engagement service, has helped dramatically reduce their no-show rate. "Having athena conduct appointment reminder calls and sending out reminder emails and text messages have helped erase our no-show rate and increase patient volume," she said. Staff have been very successful in driving adoption of athenaOne's portal, which provides 24/7 access to lab results, health records, and payment options.

The hospital uses athenaOne to track and flag quality measures that need to be addressed for their population. "We run reports all the time to see what preventive care our patients need," said Tidwell. "It's easy to generate letters, calls or emails to patients to remind them that they need to schedule a wellness exam, colon cancer screening or a mammogram." The hospital was not previously able to track and meet quality measures like this at scale.

Hempstead and her team are particularly pleased with their ability to create custom campaigns for certain populations, which improves the likelihood they will come in for an appointment. "When we turn on a campaign," Hempstead says, "we can personalize the message, decide how many people it goes to, how it gets sent, and what time of day it arrives." Unlike with previous solutions, DMH is on track to qualify for incentives from a large commercial payer based on their quality performance.

Benchmarking and teamwork engage providers and staff

athenaOne provides DMH and Alliant with exceptional insight into financial, clinical and operational performance at all levels of the organization. Alliant regularly shares these reports with DMH leadership. "The data and visibility we get with athenaOne allows us to benchmark against best practices and set targets for training and development," said David Bowling, Regional chief financial officer, vice president of finance at Alliant Management Services. Hempstead and her team use this insight to drive improvement and teamwork.

Hempstead encourages staff and providers to take ownership of the hospital's quality of care and reimbursement success. She has leveraged athenaOne's reporting to help people see how they are part of a team. "We want our providers and staff understand what it means when we document efficiently and meet quality measures," she said. "Not only do we get appropriately reimbursed for care and qualify for incentives, but we also advance our reputation and reach in the community."

Hempstead also uses athenahealth's reporting to provide feedback to individual providers. For example, she regularly shares reports with physicians so they can see opportunities for corrections.

"With individual-level reporting, our physicians immediately see what we're trying to accomplish — whether it's improving sentinel metrics or coding appropriately for visits — and how they can help us accomplish that," she said. "We all want to perform at the highest levels possible, because that's good for everybody."

Getting through the unexpected without a break in care

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, DMH was able to continue providing services because of athenahealth's mobile-ready, cloud-based solution. In some cases, productivity increased because staff could access the EHR remotely to close encounters and providers could see more telehealth patients. "There was no break in care," said Hempstead. "We had staff and some providers working from home. It was easy to set up because athenaOne is accessible from anywhere."

DMH providers even saw some patients in the hospital's parking lot to make sure everyone received care. "No matter where we saw patients, we were able to use athena's EHR just like we had a face-to-face patient in the room," said Hempstead. "It helped us maintain patient communication and efficient workflows during an unpredictable time."

With the partnership of Alliant and athenahealth, DMH looks ahead to continued expansion of services, patient volume, and revenue. "I can't say enough good things about the solutions that Alliant and athenahealth deliver," said Hempstead. "Their combined support has helped us improve care, and they truly value our input and collaboration."

"Alliant's mission is to help rural hospitals identify and achieve sustainable business models. We focus on bridging the skills/resource gap for rural hospitals with customized management solutions to address the clinical and operating challenges in rural and small markets. athenahealth works with us to design the best partnership to support our business models and servicing of the clinics."

David Bowling, regional chief financial officer,
vice president of finance at Alliant Management Services

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These results reflect the experience of one particular organization and are not necessarily what every athenahealth customer should expect.