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Cascade Medical Center

ADP's athenahealth Partnership Delivers the Cure for Rural Medical Center

As the only medical facility in Cascade, Idaho — a rural town of 900 people nestled between Boise and a popular skiing destination — Cascade Medical Center faces some unique challenges, particularly when it comes to staffing.

With just 40 employees, an emergency room filled with injured tourists and an entire town to serve, the center frequently needs its workers to put in overtime — often without much notice. And as with most remote medical centers, particularly those in rural areas, finding qualified employees isn't easy.

"People don't come racing to Cascade, Idaho to go to work," said Financial Services Director Kimberly Dalrymple, "so the employees that you do have, you want to make sure that they're well taken care of."

For Dalrymple, who is the closest thing Cascade has to an HR department, that means making sure her employees' hours, overtime and paid time off are properly tracked and consistent with compliance requirements. It means helping them get their tax documents in order. And it means juggling her HR duties with her financial responsibilities.

Dalrymple shared how Cascade leverages athenahealth's partnership with ADP to reduce errors and time spent on payroll and time and labor management; dedicate more time to strategic HR and financial initiatives; and provide an automated and efficient experience to employees.

A Broken System

When Dalrymple arrived at Cascade in April 2017, she found herself struggling to find the time to tend to all the HR needs. At the time, the center was running on a management software system that was specifically designed for community health providers. But it wasn't built with HR managers in mind. The system included a module for payroll, but otherwise did not offer any automated assistance with typical HR duties. And things were not running smoothly.

"When you spend four to six hours trying to do payroll, that's just one more day you're getting behind on everything else,"

Quick Facts

Company: Cascade Medical Center

Headquarters: Cascade, Idaho

Industry: Health care

Number of Employees: 40

Products: ADP Workforce Now® and athenaOne for Hospitals and Health Systems

Learn more about Cascade Medical Center at www.cascademedicalcenter.net/

she said, "and the last thing that usually happens is dealing with employee health insurance benefits."

With no system for tracking time and attendance, Dalrymple inherited an inefficient process that was prone to errors. "We were using paper time cards," she said.

The employees were filling the time cards out themselves, leaving the door open to mistakes. Plus, the nurses would work in multiple departments in any given shift — a common procedure at smaller hospitals, but hard to track with paper time cards. Before long, keeping tabs on everyone's regular hours, to say nothing of their overtime or PTO, started to feel to Dalrymple like a job in itself.

Even with the software module, the payroll process was laborious. Twice a month, Dalrymple would have to enter the handwritten information from the time cards into the system, confirm its accuracy and then print and distribute the checks to each employee locally. Not surprisingly, people weren't getting paid the right amounts, and those complaints would come straight to Dalrymple.

When tax time rolled around, Dalrymple had no automated way to send the proper forms to her staff. "We had to go out to Google and get the right forms and make sure that they had them in their hands every year," she said. Employees would manually fill out their W4s and hand them in for Dalrymple to process.

Overall, Dalrymple was spending so much of her day tending to the HR aspects of her job that you would barely know she was also the financial services director. “Part of my job is working through the financials of the company,” she said — not a small responsibility. But who has time for that when your coworkers are worried about not getting their checks, or getting their taxes filed on time?

Automation Beats Paper

Seven months after her arrival, the medical center scrapped its existing system and partnered with athenahealth, one of the country’s leading providers of electronic health records and medical billing software. athenahealth helps hospitals and health systems boost their bottom line, improve access to clinical and financial information, become the provider of choice in their community and focus on patient care. In December 2016, athenahealth forged an alliance with ADP to integrate their cloud-based platforms and offer ADP’s services and support. With this partnership, athenahealth can pass network learnings on to their clients and can take on work at scale on their clients’ behalf.

As an athenahealth medical center, Cascade gained access to ADP Workforce Now® payroll and time and attendance solutions, which allowed Dalrymple to automate many of the processes she had previously been doing by hand.

Within weeks, Cascade had done away with the paper time cards and all their maddening flaws. “With ADP, we’re able to have people clock in and out,” Dalrymple said. No longer were employees responsible for reporting their own hours.

By integrating payroll and time and attendance data, Dalrymple can more accurately track and monitor hours worked and analyze key metrics, such as overtime hours and employee absences, making it far simpler to meet compliance requirements.

Those solutions also allow Dalrymple to shift some of the work back on the staff itself. “With them having the ability to go in and change their W4s and track their own PTO, it saves me time, but it also puts some more of the responsibility on the employees,” she said.

Because the staff hours, including all overtime and PTO, are now entered directly into the system, the time it takes Dalrymple to process payroll has been reduced by more than 80 percent. “Now that we’ve finally got it integrated the way we needed to, it’s taking maybe an hour with all the review processes to do it,” she said.

Since the ADP and athenaOne for Hospitals and Health Systems solutions are integrated, Dalrymple doesn’t have to double-enter the data; it flows seamlessly from one system to the other, making it easier for her to focus on the company’s financials. “We’re able to automatically import our payroll into Intacct, which [athenahealth uses as their] financial system,” she said. “It allows for ease of preparing those financials for the monthly board meetings.”

A Partnership That Makes Everyone Healthier

Dalrymple says the greatest benefit of the ADP/athenahealth solution so far is the additional time she now has to focus on the previously neglected aspects of her job, not the least of which is her employees’ well-being. “I’ve actually been able to spend more time going over the benefits with the employees and making sure that the benefits are what we want for the employees and that they have the benefits plan that they need,” she said.

Dalrymple isn’t the only one saving time. ADP’s solutions allow the nurses to electronically enter the different departments that they’re working in, even during a single shift. “Being able to have that access electronically, and not have to worry about writing it on a piece of paper, that has been a big time-savings for them,” Dalrymple said. Fortunately for Dalrymple, this also means fewer complaints.

Although Cascade had previously used a system that claimed to be designed for small healthcare centers, Dalrymple says the automation of the athenahealth/ADP system has done more to help the center stay true to its roots without sacrificing efficiency or wasting money. As one example, she cites ADP’s customer service desk and the agent who regularly helps her. “Every time I call him, he’s like, ‘Hey, how’s it going over there?’ He knows me and he’s talked me through different issues,” she said.

That kind of service feels right for Cascade, she said. “I like that small group feel, and our small group with athenahealth seems to really make things easy.”

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– Kimberly Dalrymple