

Case Study: Rio Grande Hospital, Del Norte, Colorado



"We wanted a system that was designed for a Critical Access Hospital with Rural Health and Provider-Based clinics, and Amrita has tailored their system exactly to our needs, both for the Hospital EHR and for our billing system. They have been easy to work with and have designed a very efficient system for Rio Grande Hospital. Additionally, they have been very responsive for any regulatory changes that have affected claims or have changed our processes." –Arlene Harms, CEO Rio Grande

Location: Rio Grande Hospital, Del Norte, Colorado

Facility: Critical Access Hospital (CAH) with 17 licensed beds and 4 associated clinics

Amrita Solution: All fully integrated Amrita HIS modules, including Patient Portal and Business Intelligence

Integration: Clearinghouse, Pyxis drug dispensing, Exit-care for Patient education, CO-RHIO for data exchange, Aprima for Ambulatory C-CDA, Merge for Lab orders/results, NewCrop for ePrescriptions, MaxMD for DIRECT email, Lexi for Drug Database, UpToDate for Infobutton

Challenges

- Installation of ONC certified EHR product, comprehensive user training, and Meaningful Use attestation
- Create a consolidated patient account between hospital and clinics
- Achieve prompt and accurate billing, taking into consideration frequent changes in billing rules
- Provide a user-friendly interface for Providers and Nursing staff to access their patients' comprehensive records
- Facilitate patient access to medical records using portal

Solution

- Implementation of Amrita HIS, which has Integrated modules built on a single database
- Customization of solution to meet the unique workflow requirements
- Incorporation of user feedback to further optimize the user interface
- Development of user-defined reports, nursing flowsheets, and clinical templates

Benefits

- Intuitive screens for ease in user adoption, from paper to electronic patient records
- Successful Meaningful Use attestation
- Visual alert-based dashboard for Nursing, Lab and Radiology staff
- Integrated system, eliminating any data duplication
- Real-time reporting with custom formatting

Introduction

Rio Grande Hospital is a Critical Access Hospital with 17 licensed beds, a level 4 trauma designation, a 5-Bed ER, full-service Lab, Orthopedics, Physical Therapy, Radiology, Respiratory Therapy and Surgery services. In addition, it includes four Clinics located in Creede, Del Norte, Monta Vista and South Fork. It is part of Valley Citizens Foundation for Healthcare Inc, a community nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide health care to the Western San Luis Valley.

History

With the goal of having a digital patient record as well as improved the workflow processes in various departments, Rio Grande Hospital faced a dilemma: which EMR system to adopt. There were various options in the market, but as a small hospital with budgetary constraints, it was important to make the right decision. The important factors to be kept in perspective were:

- Need for an integrated system, replacing the existing HIS as well as having a strong EHR module
- Ability to keep parts of the existing system that were working well, like LIS
- Vendor who gives due importance to the unique requirements of a CAH along with associated clinics, including the need for customization.
- Should be web-based, since the concept of digital notebooks and pads usage in workplace (including hospital) was evolving
- Ability to work with the users directly, as RGH has limited IT resources of its own
- Hand-hold users during the HIS transition
- Last but not the least, should be cost-effective, with low initial cost as well as reasonable monthly / annual support fees

With the above criteria, they were advised by the Colorado Rural Health Organization to partner with a smaller vendor who is willing to work closely with its users to provide a customized solution, instead of a larger, costlier, and less flexible vendor.

Right Decision

RGH selected Amrita over other vendors because they could see a commitment and dedication as well as a willingness to work with their team. It became a partnership rather than a vendor-client relationship. RGH successfully sunset the old hospital system and transitioned over to Amrita HIS for all desired departments and interfaced with other system / devices as required. During the transition to the Amrita system, there were times when staff was challenged, but having Amrita resources by their side handholding gave the required confidence for a successful implementation. This was repeated at other critical times when Amrita made resources available on-site, for example during the ICD-9 to ICD-10 cutover.

Amrita's contribution

- Amrita put the right team together onsite to work with RGH management and users. The onsite team spent significant time with the various departments to understand their current workflow processes.
- Amrita followed up by making the required customizations, replacing their old system with a comprehensive and effective Amrita solution.
- Wherever required, Amrita was integrated with a 3rd party solution provider to ensure end-to-end workflow process support.
- Since the majority of the patients coming to the hospital are from one of their four associated clinics, Amrita Hospital system has been interfaced with Aprma Ambulatory system for Patient registration and Patient clinical information exchange using C-CDA format as well as DFT for charges. This enables RGH to have a single patient account, managed in Amrita HIS, supporting both clinic and hospital billing.
- Many rounds of classroom instruction and hands-on sessions ensured that users were well trained.
- The importance of quick response and resolution was understood when switch over was planned, and Amrita resources were onsite to work closely with the RGH IT manager.

Partnership continues to Evolve

Amrita team is very closely engaged with RGH users even during the post-implementation support period. An annual onsite exercise meeting is scheduled with all departmental heads to discuss any feedback and workflow issues. Based on the criticality, issues are prioritized and addressed to provide timely software updates, ensuring work continues without disruption. When Medicare or any other payers require changes, the Amrita team works with RGH to ensure that a solution is updated in a timely manner. This has been made possible through the use of rule-based billing engine.

Key Performance Indicators

The revenue for RGH has increased over the last few years, and at the same time the Accounts Receivable has reduced. This is a very healthy indicator of the effectiveness of Amrita HIS, and its effective use by RGH users.

A single patient account has made life very easy for both patients and hospital staff, since all superbills/claims for a patient can be seen together (irrespective of Clinic visit, Lab services, ER visit or Hospital admission). With the implementation of the Visual Alert Dashboard for Nursing, Lab, and Radiology staff, the patient services have become time-liner ensuring a quick turn-around time.



RGH Staff, CEO Arlene Harms on left