



## ChesPenn Health Services

Data Abstraction Services Hasten EHR Adoption and Conversion  
Physicians Save Time and Rely on Quality EHR Data from Day One

### Provider Profile:

- Four health center locations FQHC
- 12,510 annual visits
- 2,500 patients
- 20 providers

### Results:

- Boost physician satisfaction with EHR
- Minimize productivity loss / revenue drop
- Ensure quality data from day one
- Reduce staff stress and workload

### Background:

Established in 1973, ChesPenn Health Services is a federally qualified health center (FQHC) located in Chester, Pennsylvania. The organization serves the general medical, pediatric and dental needs of uninsured and under-insured patients across Chester and Delaware counties. Two of its four locations had a paper-based medical record while the remaining locations were using a legacy Electronic Health Record (EHR) when the decision was made to convert the entire organization to the GE Centricity™ EHR.

### Challenge:

Like most FQHC`s, ChesPenn was faced with the challenge to implement their new EHR quickly and efficiently. Government grant dollars were available and needed to be used within two years—or the funding would be lost.

ChesPenn physicians were eager for a new EHR that all facilities would utilize. Since half of the physicians had never used an EHR, the organization focused heavily on helping clinicians adapt to the new processes and workflows. The key to success was to ensure productivity of ChesPenn`s most expensive resource: the physician.

With regard to office staff, ChesPenn`s goal was to maintain productivity and business operations while deploying the new EHR. Susan Spragins, Operations Manager, took precautions to minimize any negative impact on day-to-day patient care. Furthermore, she could not afford to place additional tasks or stress on the already overburdened ChesPenn staff.

A local hospital served as a central data center and technology hub for ChesPenn, leasing the GE Centricity system to them for a monthly fee. This arrangement allowed ChesPenn to focus on system deployment across all four sites within the mandatory timeframe—and ensure quality data would be available from day one.

### Solution:

Spragins and Carol Dickol Revak, Principal, Revak Consulting, brainstormed new methods to reduce implementation timeframes and minimize staff involvement. One idea was to outsource the initial clinical data abstraction and upload process to clinical experts at IOD Incorporated. By outsourcing initial clinical data abstraction to IOD, Spragins and Revak met three core challenges:

- Ensure the EHR was fully implemented within a 24-month timeframe
- Maintain day-to-day productivity and patient care goals
- Guarantee availability of historical patient data to physicians on day one

Registered nurses from IOD were given access to historical patient charts, either paper-based or the legacy EHR. Initially starting with patients who had over 20 visits, they abstracted and entered key clinical data into the new EHR. Upon completion of pre-loading the patients' data, the paper chart was then 'red taped.' This alerted physicians that clinical information was available in the new EHR. Physicians were allowed to use both paper records and the new EHR during the first six months of go-live, which eased the transition for everyone.

Once the recurring patient information was complete, IOD data abstractors entered immunization, medication lists and problem lists for all patients with upcoming, scheduled office visits. Physicians were responsible for entering medical history and social history as part of their system training. Within six months, the historical data of over 30% of all patients was entered into the new EHR and now, one year post go-live, physicians no longer request the paper chart.

**“Our physicians loved having patient data in the GE Centricity EHR on day one. I would advise any provider to budget for this service.”**

Susan Spragins  
Operations Manager





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### Results:

ChesPenn experienced a faster and smoother EHR implementation thanks to IOD`s data abstraction services team. Having pre-loaded data was a big selling point for physicians and office staff as it helped ensure minimal down time, productivity loss or negative impact on day-to-day patient care.

### Pre-Loaded EHR Data a Big Selling Point

Physicians embraced the technology knowing quality, historical data had been pre-loaded. "The physicians loved the pre-loaded data," mentions Spragins. "They were initially concerned a new EHR would disrupt patient flow, but it had no impact because historical information was in the system on day one."

Additionally, office staff was relieved of entering new information for every office visit—an extremely time consuming task. "The service was a real time saver for everyone," she adds.

### Quality Data from Go Live

From a quality perspective, ChesPenn physicians were secure with the accuracy of IOD`s data abstraction team given their clinical background. As registered nurses, they easily identified any out-of-range information and ensured data was correct. This was particularly important with medication and dosage data since one error could cause severe patient safety issues.

### Accelerated EHR Deployment and Adoption

In today`s race to implement electronic records, most organizations are considering outside services to assist with at least portions of their EHR transition. ChesPenn was no exception and, based on its experience, highly recommends that other clinics and physician practices consider outsourced data abstraction services as part of their EHR implementation budget.

"I would advise any provider to budget for this service," concludes Spragins. "When performing day-to-day patient care, physicians, nurses and office staff simply don`t have time to enter historical patient information and ensure its accuracy. Outsourced data abstraction services minimize stress on clinic staffs during EHR implementation while also ensuring quality data is available for patient care."

**"Garbage in means garbage out with EHR data, and can cause huge patient safety problems down the road particularly for medication and dosage information. Data abstractors pre-loading historical patient information into the EHR should have clinical backgrounds and knowledge."**

Susan Spragins  
Operations Manager

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