



# 3-minute case study: All hands on deck for quality

By Lia Novotny | March 27, 2018

What drives success in healthcare? Here's a tactic from a leading community health center.

## The problem

Family First Health of York County, Pennsylvania, wanted to engage every employee in its mission to improve the health of the region. It needed “everybody to see how they impact the bigger picture of patient outcomes” – no matter what their role, says Courtney Lewis, vice president of marketing and community engagement for the federally qualified health center.

## The solution

Mindful that small steps wouldn't do it, Family First in 2017 embarked on an ambitious organization-wide program to improve patient quality metrics. “It's not just

the clinical staff that's responsible for meeting these measures,” says Lewis. “It involves everybody, from the front desk staff to marketing; it's across the board.”

To launch the program, the quality committee selected four measures that matter most to its patient population: colorectal cancer screenings, cervical cancer screenings, hypertension control, and, because the local water supply is not fluoridated, dental sealants.

The goal was to improve each measure by 5 to 10 percent by the end of the year. Employees were told they'd receive \$100 each when Family First successfully met or exceeded its target on one measure, \$150 for two measures, and \$175 for all four. And every day, employees logging into their computers were greeted with a graphic showing progress both for their specific site and across the organization.

Each site has a designated champion for every quality

measure, charged with coordinating monthly all-staff meetings to review progress, barriers, and tips for improvement. Best practices are collected at those meetings and shared with all sites so they can be adopted and implemented quickly.

“That’s how we get buy-in from everyone,” says Craig Osborn, vice president of operations. “It is truly a team effort where everybody’s opinion is valued. It’s not just about watching a graph change.”

## The outcomes

By November of 2017, Family First had met its targets on all four measures for the year, and every employee (of 12 months or more) received a bonus of \$175. And those dental sealants? Fifty-nine percent of eligible children received them, well above the goal of 45 percent.

Family First’s leadership is equally excited about the rising staff morale and engagement, says Osborn. In a relatively short period, they’ve seen a cultural shift across the organization. Just one example: A receptionist arriving at a review meeting with an armful of materials on hypertension control she wanted to share with patients at check-in and check-out.

“This was the level of team engagement we wanted to see when we started the program,” says Osborn. “People got into healthcare to help. When you align around mission, it empowers people to do just that.”

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*Lia Novotny is a frequent contributor to athenaInsight.*

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