

## CASE STUDY

# Jasper General Hospital

## Bay Springs, Mississippi

### County Hospital Does Away with Paper And Gets Efficient with Cloud-Based EHR

Jasper General Hospital in Bay Springs, Mississippi is a 16-bed county hospital that includes a Family Medical Clinic and assisted living facility. Before implementing athenaClinicals for Hospitals & Health Systems, clinicians struggled with multiple clunky software systems and tedious paper charting. With athenahealth's cloud-based EHR solution, they have streamlined ordering and charting, can spend more time with patients during visits, and are easily meeting Meaningful Use requirements.

#### 'A nerve-wracking decision'

Before implementing athenaClinicals for Hospitals and Health Systems, Jasper's clinicians were stuck with poorly functioning electronic medical records software. "No one liked our old electronic medical records system," said Jada Lowe, Jasper's director of nursing. "We would put orders into the system but still have to write them up elsewhere. At that point, we would rather use paper."

Despite frustration with the old system, transitioning to a new EHR was daunting. "Having been in healthcare for years, I was familiar with the challenges of changing to a new electronic medical records system," said Clinton Eaves, Jasper's CEO. "It was a nerve-wracking decision. But I knew athenahealth would be a good fit."

#### Impressive hospital implementation

Lowe explained that implementation went very well at the hospital. "Implementation was awesome," she said. "The athenahealth team came in for the go-live. They were very helpful and thorough. It helped having someone work with the nurses to answer all their questions and address all their concerns while we were going live."

Lowe especially appreciated having athenahealth onsite during the implementation. "We didn't have to work through a middle person on the phone. athenahealth team members were actually here. They sat the nurses down around the table, showed them everything, and let them ask their own questions."

"I have been very impressed with athenahealth and their implementation process," Eaves added. "They sent in the people and resources that we needed. A lot of time in a conversion like this, you don't get the resources you need on the ground. That has not been the case with athenahealth. They have been very responsive and on top of what's going on."

#### At a Glance

- Located in Bay Springs, Mississippi
- 16 acute care beds
- Family Medical Clinic
- 110-bed nursing home

#### Issues

- Time consuming paper charting
- Need to leave exam room to document visit
- Physicians overwhelmed with paper orders
- Multiple, outdated software systems

#### Solution

athenaClinicals for Hospitals & Health Systems

#### Results

- Near complete transition away from paper records
- Streamlined, online ordering and charting
- Clinicians stay in the exam room during appointments
- Easily meet Meaningful Use requirements

## Uninterrupted patient visits

Before athenaClinicals for Hospitals and Health Systems, clinicians would leave the exam room during appointments to document each patient visit. Now, said Lowe, clinicians “are able to take the computer to the patients’ room and ask them questions, instead of asking and running out to the computer and going back into the room.”

In addition, Lowe reported that athenaClinicals helped ease the workload for physicians—and for nurses who used to chase them down for signatures. “Our physicians really like the EHR because they do not have to spend as much time with each chart,” she said. “It used to be a struggle to get them to sign their orders. They all have their own active, full time clinics, so it was difficult to get them over here to get paperwork done in a timely manner.” Now, she said, “Physicians can sign orders on their own time. We don’t have to hunt them down and bring them a chart marked up with ‘sign here, here and here.’ It’s all right there with updates to their inbox.”

## Boosting efficiency

Immediately after implementation, paper charting became obsolete at the hospital. “We got rid of most of our paper charting,” said Lowe. “athenahealth uploaded all the forms we use into the system. We started filling those out on the computer.”

Lowe also noticed that clinical tasks have become streamlined. “I see everything electronically,” she said. “We can find what we need more quickly. And everybody can send their records to us electronically now.”

She added, “It’s been a very easy system to learn how to operate. Admissions and discharges are simple check-off lists. You can leave notes, but it’s all laid out for you. All you have to do is make your choices and click on them, and you’re done. Everybody likes the checklists.”

She pointed out that the new EHR also helps make referrals more efficiently. “Most of our patients go home with a home health agency, and now we are able to send records directly to those agencies. You don’t have to sit there and make copies of every little thing and send it.”

## ‘It’s been easy’ to satisfy Meaningful Use

athenahealth offers an unparalleled level of support for its clients, especially as the industry is transitioning to value-based care and hospitals and health systems need to capture more and more quality measures. Like the majority of athenahealth clients, Jasper has been successful meeting Meaningful Use measures. “I appreciate the fact that I can look on the EHR dashboard and see where we need to follow up,” said Lowe. “As far as meeting Meaningful Use measures, it’s been easy.”

“I love the level of support we’ve gotten from athena,” continued Lowe. “I can email the support team and I don’t have to sit on the phone waiting to tell someone what I need. I just email them and they are working on it.”

## An exciting future

Eaves has big plans to bring Jasper’s healthcare entities under a single system—and he knows athenahealth is the right partner to get him there. “As we move into the EMR world, we have looked at the patient going from hospital A to hospital B and being able to transfer their information,” he said. “What I envision is for our physicians to sit down with the EHR and to see their patient in any of our entities—our hospital, nursing home, assisted living facility, clinic or home health agency. athenahealth is eager to work on that with us.”

He continued, “What I really like about athenahealth is that as I’ve laid out this picture of drawing our organizations together, they have been receptive and have embraced it. It’s exciting for me to have this opportunity with athenahealth.”



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