

CASE STUDY

Danvers Family Doctors

Danvers, Massachusetts

Personal Patient Care in a Changing Medical World

"My greatest challenge is practicing medicine meaningfully in a changing medical world," says Dr. Subroto Bhattacharya. "We want to take care of our patients as people, not as body parts or diagnoses." Before switching to athenaOne, the practice was frustrated with an expensive EHR that required too many clicks. With athenahealth's network-enabled EHR and practice management services, they enjoy user-friendly features designed for small practices, full integration between clinical and billing activities, and easy participation in quality programs.

Putting Patients First

As a solo family physician, Dr. Bhattacharya is well aware of the trends towards consolidation and quality management in healthcare. "Medicine is being diluted in a cookie-cutter, corporate way," he explains. "I want to practice medicine that is meaningful to the people who matter the most—the patients."

In 2015, he switched to athenaOne, athenahealth's medical record and practice management service. And he couldn't be more satisfied with the results.

"People do not come to me because they are happy," says Dr. Bhattacharya. "They come in a moment of misery. I can't fix everything. But I can give them my undivided attention and kindness." With an intuitive, easy-to-use EHR that allows him to complete documentation in a few minutes, it's easy to make the most of every encounter.

A System Designed for Small Practices

"athenaOne is not a hospital system that has been downsized for primary care," says Dr. Bhattacharya. "It is an office-based solution for office-based needs."

With their previous system, which was run through a hospital, practice staff grew frustrated with unresolved IT problems. Now, for the rare issue they need help with, Dr. Bhattacharya says, "There is always someone at athenahealth we can talk to directly. Responsiveness to our questions and turnaround time for getting help are excellent."

Reducing Administrative Work

"About 30 percent of what I do is practicing clinical medicine," says Dr. Bhattacharya. "The other 70 percent is medical housekeeping—meeting the needs of payers who are measuring quality of work."

With behind-the-scenes service teams and powerful network intelligence, athenahealth takes on work like receiving and sorting faxes, attaching data to patient charts, performing reminder calls and eligibility checks, denial follow-ups, and more. Plus, the clinical workflows within athenaNet are organized for maximum productivity.

"There are features in athenaClinicals [the electronic health records service within athenaOne] that really help me with the busy work," explains Dr. Bhattacharya. "I

At a Glance

- Small suburban family medicine practice
- One physician, four clinical staff, one office manager
- 6,000 patients
- 14,000 visits per year

Solutions

- athenaOne®
- athenaClinicals®
- athenaCollector®
- athenaCommunicator®
- athenaCoordinator®

Issues

- Inefficient EHR that was "scaled down" from hospital system
- No integration between clinical and billing activities
- Difficult to participate in quality programs
- High upfront costs

Results

- Intuitive EHR designed for small practices
- Seamless integration between clinical and billing activities
- Easy quality program reporting with strong performance
- Low upfront costs

can see which routine procedures need to be asked about at each visit. It's easy to navigate the EHR while I'm with the patient. It's the most effective record I've used." And as a cloud-based service, providers can log on from anywhere. "I can use it with my tablet, laptop, or desktop," says Dr. Bhattacharya. "That is very helpful."

Regina Moorman, the practice manager, adds, "Our nurse practitioners save at least two hours in documentation time compared to the other systems we've had. When staff need to look at a patient's chart, we see everything on the same screen—vaccines, medications, history. We don't have to close out and open new windows. It has made a tremendous difference."

Another benefit, Dr. Bhattacharya explains, is that lab results come back very quickly. "Expectations are changing," he says. "People go to a lab in the morning and they expect to have results that evening." athenaClinicals helps the practice meet patient expectations—and provide better care—by promptly closing the loop on labs.

Easing the Burden of New Payment Models

The practice is confident about succeeding as quality programs change. "In healthcare, there will always be evolving guidelines," says Dr. Bhattacharya. "We feel very comfortable that athenahealth will help us continue to meet the challenges of reporting."

"I have a sense of security," agrees Ms. Moorman. "athenahealth is doing everything they need to prepare us for the future."

"Reporting to quality programs like MIPS has been very simple," says Dr. Bhattacharya. The Quality Tab in athenaNet makes it easy for providers to see what is required during each patient visit, and document accordingly. "With all the quality reporting on the left-hand side of the chart, I spend my appointment time efficiently. And I can check our practice's performance anytime."

A Simpler, Safer Way to Handle Prescriptions

"One of the greatest advantages of athenaClinicals has been the integration with SureScripts," explains Dr. Bhattacharya. "When I ask a patient what new medication their cardiologist put them on, they tell me it's 'an oblong white pill.' Now, I can see new medications right on the patient's chart."

That has made medication reconciliation much easier—and safer. "With athenaClinicals," he says, "we don't have to rely on the patient's recollection of what medications

they are taking, which could result in drug interactions that are not safe."

"The Best Blend" of Clinical and Billing Functions

The practice's revenue is strong and days in accounts receivable has fallen to an average of 27 days. That's due to the seamless integration of athenaOne, which, in addition to medical records, also includes a practice management service that helps maximize their revenue and takes on the administrative work involved in processing claims.

"athenaOne is the best blend between clinical work and billing," says Dr. Bhattacharya. "When I see a patient, the last thing on my mind is billing. But when the encounter is done, I have to make sure I'm billing the right way. Am I documenting each encounter correctly, legally, and in compliance with HIPAA? athena has been wonderful for that."

Ms. Moorman agrees. "Our billing turnaround has been far faster than it's ever been. It's great the way claims are scrubbed before they go out, the way athena updates claims rules, and the way they work with me if there's an issue."

Remaining Independent—But Not Alone

Personal connection to each patient is the reason why Dr. Bhattacharya continues to be a solo practitioner. With athenahealth's services and support, he can thrive independently, but is not alone.

"There is a sense of confidence knowing I'm connected to athenahealth's large group of providers across the country," he says. "We're all benefitting from real-time updates to the network. That is very helpful and comforting to us."

The athenaCommunicator patient portal has also streamlined work. "When information came through the phone, front desk staff used to create a phone note in the record. The [patient] portal took away that extra layer of work, and brings that message directly to the clinicians," says Dr. Bhattacharya. "If someone needs a prescription renewal, it goes right into the portal. If someone has a question, it doesn't have to be interpreted by the staff, it comes directly to the clinicians," he says.

They also appreciate being available to patients outside of office visits. "When patients contact us through the portal, they know we will respond to them before the day is out," said Dr. Bhattacharya. "That has made a huge difference."



Find out more. Call **866.817.5738** or visit us online at **athenahealth.com**