

Case Study >>>>

One Hospital Community Ahead of HITECH with NextGen Connectivity Solutions

In 2004—long before the ARRA and HITECH Acts were passed—visionaries at the Kittitas Valley Community Hospital in central Washington set out on a mission to improve the quality of care in their medical community with a community health information exchange (HIE) based on a common electronic health record (EHR) platform.

After a 2-year effort to find solutions that fulfilled most, if not all, of their carefully prioritized criteria, an almost unanimous decision was made to go with NextGen® Ambulatory EHR and NextgenSM HIE (formerly Community Health Solution)—a secure data exchange and repository that stores, displays, and exchanges patient information. In addition, they also decided to go with NextGen® Practice Management and NextGenSM Patient Portal, due to the added benefits they could provide the community.

“We chose NextGen for many reasons, but the biggest differentiators for us were NextGen’s HIE and Patient Portal. No one else even compared,” explained Kathryn Houck, NextGen Projects Manager of Kittitas Valley Community Hospital.

Overview

HOSPITAL

Kittitas Valley Community Hospital
Kittitas County, WA
www.kvch.com

HOSPITAL PROFILE

The Kittitas Valley Community Hospital founded the Kittitas Valley Community Health Information Network (KVCHIN) in 2006 in an effort to improve the healthcare of the community through HIT. KVCHIN consists of hospital-owned and independent practices, a CHC, and a county health department. Specialties include: family practice, internal medicine, OB-GYN, pediatrics, orthopedics, hospitalists, general surgeons, and coming soon—ER doctors.

BUSINESS PROBLEM

The Kittitas County Enterprise needed a flexible system that could be customized to accommodate the needs of their diverse healthcare providers, while allowing them to share critical patient data. It also needed to be able to integrate with the hospital’s McKesson HIS system.

SOLUTION

Implemented the full connectivity suite of NextGen products: NextGen Ambulatory EHR, NextGen PM, Nextgen HIE, and NextGen Patient Portal. The hospital subsidizes 85% of EHR and HIE implementation and ongoing support costs through Stark relaxation efforts to help providers overcome cost barriers to adoption.

PRODUCT DISTINCTIONS

- Customizable software – usable out of the box with scalability for future needs
- Health maintenance/disease management modules
- Seamless integration between EHR and PM functionality
- Ability to manage common data on an enterprise level, and practice-specific data on an individual basis
- Improved patient communications
- HIE proven in other communities

BENEFITS

- Faster access to information
- Better documentation and reporting
- Increased efficiencies – elimination of redundant diagnostic tests, better communication between referrer and specialist, time savings
- Improved patient care and safety
- Able to see more patients each day

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Seeing the Benefits, Looking Ahead

Remarkably, the community went live on almost all systems within the span of 1 year, which Houck agreed was a very aggressive go-live schedule. Fortunately it all worked out and response from providers was positive. Almost immediately, users reported increased efficiencies—including less paperwork and the ability to see more patients.

However, one of the biggest advantages, according to Houck, has been the ability to reduce errors and duplication, especially on medications and medication reconciliations. “Our hospital is doing a big push towards medication reconciliation and this [HIE] allows us to download directly from the originating office any medications, and if we make any changes to those medications while that person is here for a consult, all of that information pushes back to the primary care physician...allowing for a more complete patient record at the point of care.”

Fast forward to today and the group, now known as the Kittitas Valley Community Health Information Network (KVCHIN), consists of 30 providers in Kittitas County, including hospital-owned and independent clinics, the county health department, and a federally qualified health center. They all partner together to exchange critical patient

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data such as medications, allergies, chronic problems, active diagnoses, and chart notes— for the ultimate goal of improved care.

Their vision for a unified medical community is now a reality. However, they aren’t quite finished yet—future plans include connecting ER doctors and possibly a vision center.

Whatever their future may hold, one thing is for certain: KVCHIN is the perfect example of what one community can accomplish when they work together for the greater good. The added benefit is that many of them are also well prepared for taking advantage of stimulus incentives from the HITECH Act.

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For full information about the features and functions of NextGen Healthcare’s products and services, please contact us at www.nextgen.com/contact.

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