

Feather River Tribal Health Improves Patient Access, Engagement, and Staff Efficiency

THE CHALLENGE

Limited engagement, manual work, and access bottlenecks

Before modernizing their approach to patient engagement, Feather River Tribal Health relied on basic appointment reminders via an outdated system that created friction for both patients and staff. Messaging was limited, reporting was difficult, and patient responses often fell outside simple “confirm or cancel” options, leaving staff to manually track cancellations, run reports, and follow up with patients.

“Our board wasn’t happy. When the reminders went out, it was X to cancel and C to confirm. That was really confusing for some of our patients. There was also a message limit that you could only put so much text in the queue to send,” said Mike Harris, Chief Information Officer at Feather River Tribal Health, Inc.

Phone lines were frequently overwhelmed, especially on Monday mornings and after holidays, when patients called to schedule or reschedule appointments. In dental services alone, staff spent hours each day making repeated phone calls to fill last minute openings—time that could have been spent supporting patients in care.

Furthermore, leadership wanted to improve access without adding staff, while ensuring any new technology would enhance, not replace, the work of their teams.

THE SOLUTION

A more connected, automated patient experience

Feather River Tribal Health onboarded NextGen Patient Engage in January 2025, modernizing patient reminders and two-way messaging, and quickly saw stronger engagement and clearer communication with patients. Instead of one-way notifications, staff gained a true dialogue, allowing them to respond to patient needs in real time and ensuring no message went unanswered.

“We now have a bidirectional interface between our patients... It becomes a dialogue with the patient. Those responses come back, they’re flagged, we can deal with them. The patient’s not left hanging with a blank text message,” said Harris.

Building on that success, FRTH expanded access with NextGen Self-Scheduling and NextGen Waitlist. Patients can now request appointments anytime, without waiting on hold or calling during business hours. When cancellations occur, available slots are automatically offered to eligible patients, filling schedules faster without manual outreach.

CLIENT PROFILE

Feather River Tribal Health, Inc.

Background: Feather River Tribal Health (FRTH) is a community-based healthcare organization delivering integrated medical, dental, and behavioral health services. Like many safety-net and tribal health organizations, FRTH balances high patient demand with limited staff capacity—making access, communication, and operational efficiency critical to delivering quality care.

NextGen Healthcare Solutions:

NextGen® Enterprise EHR

NextGen® Patient Engage powered by Luma

NextGen® Self-Scheduling powered by Luma

NextGen® Waitlist powered by Luma

NextGen® Patient Engage powered by Luma

HIGHLIGHTS



+9,551 increase in YoY* scheduled appointments



+9,194 estimated YoY kept visits†



36.57% increase in revenue—largely due to scheduled appointments



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*Mike Harris
Chief Information Officer
Feather River Tribal Health, Inc.*

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The solution integrates seamlessly with FRTH’s existing NextGen Healthcare systems, automatically updating schedules when patients confirm, cancel, or book appointments—eliminating duplicate work and reducing the risk of errors.

“The wait list is great for our dental department because there could be between 3:00 to 5:00pm, openings. Staff are required to make those phone calls. If there’s an appointment opening for a filling or a crown the staff may have to call five or six different people and wait for a response. With the wait list we can send out if the cancellation happens; we can send out that message notification,” said Harris

THE IMPACT

Better access, less manual work, happier teams

While still early in adoption for self-scheduling and wait lists, FRTH has already seen meaningful operational improvements:

- **Improved patient engagement** through clearer, two-way communication
- **Faster schedule optimization**, especially in dental services, without staff phone calls
- **Reduced administrative burden**, allowing staff to focus on patient interactions instead of repetitive tasks.
- **Greater patient convenience**, with 24/7 access to appointment requests
- **Stronger staff confidence**, as automation supports—not replaces—their work

Staff initially had concerns about automation, but those quickly shifted once

Clinic-Wide Performance (Medical, Dental, and Behavioral Health)

Metric	FY 2024	FY 2025	YoYChange
Total Scheduled Appointments	70,660	80,211	+9,551 appointments
No-Show Percentage	16.34%	14.84%	-1.50 pts
Estimated Kept Appointments*	~59,114	~68,308	+9,194 kept visits

teams saw how technology acted as a force multiplier, handling repetitive tasks so staff could spend more time delivering care.

“It’s a supplement to what you’re already doing and it makes the staff that much more productive. It lets them be able to provide great patient care—gives those couple more moments that they can have a better interface with the patient,” said Harris.

Encouraged by early success, FRTH is exploring additional digital intake and form automation to further reduce scanning and manual data entry. Their progress has also sparked interest across neighboring tribal health organizations, creating a collaborative network where peers share best practices and build on each other’s success.

“One thing we’re in the beginning phases of but looking forward to more is the forms, being able to digitize more of our forms so that the health information staff have less scanning to do and those forms are immediately put into the health record. You can build a form in Luma, like a consent to discuss or consent to treat, and then you can send that to the patient where they can fill it out and sign it and then it automatically writes back to document management within the EHR,” said Harris.

By modernizing patient engagement and access, Feather River Tribal Health has taken a meaningful step toward delivering more responsive, efficient, and patient-centered care without adding complexity for staff. The result is a smoother experience for patients, a lighter workload for teams, and a foundation for continued innovation across the care journey.

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Talk to an expert today.
Partner with us at 855-510-6398 or results@nextgen.com

*FY 2024 vs. FY 2025
†Kept appointments estimated using provided no-show percentages across Medical, Dental, and Behavioral Health