2020 Epic Program Spotlight:
Tanner Community Connect

What a year 2020 was. From masks, zoom meetings, and empty airplanes to telehealth and contactless experiences of all kinds, nobody predicted much of what occurred throughout the year.

And while COVID disrupted normal operations and expectations in many ways, by no means did it give free passes to bail on organizational projects and initiatives. In some ways quite the opposite in fact, as greater attention was placed on essential work, financial performance, and project stewardship in all regards.

We highlight here the Tanner Health Community Connect program, which exemplified those elements, remaining steadfast and consistent throughout the year despite the impacts of COVID.

"

…Changing the implementation approach to accommodate COVID forced everyone to find new efficiencies."

The Challenge

With the 2019 calendar year spent on planning and executing preparations of the program, 2020 was always to be about implementation and expansion in the surrounding communities, as MDs were approached about transitioning to Tanner's Epic EHR platform and a new CIN being established. With a blended team of Tanner employees and Epic consultants staffed and leading initial customers forward, uncertainty took hold when COVID struck in spring. Both existing and potential customers were faced with difficult choices. Some paused conversations around implementation with Tanner entirely, while others took a hard look at the state of their revenue.

Fortunately, thanks to agile project-level maneuvering, and healthy amounts of education and assistance around telehealth, implementation schedules for in-flight customers and the program at large were able to stay on track with minimal change.

The Work

The following is a summary of HCTI's experience with Tanner and how the program was able to traverse the unexpected to keep operations moving smoothly.

Travel restrictions necessitated "virtual" implementations.

The implementation teams had to be flexible, nimble, and creative with getting the job done in non-traditional ways. Establishing new (remote) ways of partnering with the independent practices, evaluating workflows, and collaborating effectively when historically much of the work was done in-person, became crucial to success.

"We're used to being in the field, working onsite, hip-to-hip with our stakeholders and customers. We had to quickly brainstorm ways to adjust in order to provide the same level of partnership and guidance in a remote capacity." – Katie Johnston (Consultant Program Manager)

Attention to project management & communication detail.

Servicing customers at an elite level while forced into some non-traditional implementation methods meant that everyone really had to keep their eye on the prize. Collaboration and communication on a day-to-day basis were increased and ensured that work was aligned, and expectations were being met.

At the program level, coordination was sent into overdrive as well, in order to accommodate the new gaps and the extra distance between independent responsibilities and tasks. Everyone on the team was already accustomed and willing to jump in and help with items outside their comfort zone when needed, but the tracking

of it all to ensure that execution was being done to high standards and levels of customer satisfaction became even more important.

Results

Listed below are some of the tangible, real-world outcomes of the program work:

- **Seamless Customer Transitions.** Despite the pandemic and all the financial and social anxiety endured, there was great relief in being able to experience a smooth transition to the industry-leading Epic platform. Customers now have a shared patient database with Tanner, direct integration and interoperability of records throughout the extended community, and a host of new tools available for regular practice use through uncertain times
- **Budgetary Savings.** While already diligently under budget with the program, reduced travel led to additional savings. Between the travel reductions and programmatic attention to efficiencies of scale, the 2020 calendar year will come in $500-750k under the projected spend. And as the year has progressed, that's certainly gone over well with the CFO
- **Working Smarter, not Harder.** Changing the implementation approach to accommodate COVID forced everyone to find new efficiencies.

"While we had to get creative with our customers around tasks such as technical dress rehearsal and support, the reality is that a more frequent cadence of phone and video correspondence in many ways actually made procedures more efficient. Instead of working around and through office distractions and competing priorities, implementation conversations and activities actually became more focused." – Tanner Program Manager

As a result of all of this, Epic team at Healthcare Triangle has grown in experience and skill, while continuing to perform at the elite level customers and new staff orienting to Epic expect. Tanner as an organization has felt the same.

Tanner 2020 Program Overview

- 30% progress toward 3-year target provider pool, despite COVID
- Concurrent, agile implementations in rolling 10-16-week patterns (dependent on size and scope)
- Primary care, specialties, and ASC customers
- Key adjustments/lessons learned – data conversion options, independent IT vendor coordination, additional billing support

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