

Using digital integration to improve patient care and ease administrative burdens

A case study on Excel Medical Center

The downside of data

Interoperability failures. Outdated workflows. Tedious patient form management. Unfortunately, this is often the experience for many practices when working with a health plan patient assessment program.

The larger your practice is, the greater the barriers become. As clinicians see more patients, practices need to comply with more payer contracts, each with unique requirements. The extra effort can spread employees thin, especially if the office is facing staffing shortages.

That's a problem many practices see. According to one study:*

- 74% of providers say they are challenged by variations in health plan processes, changing processes and additions to clinician workloads to participate in programs
- 77% of health systems experience moderate-to-serious problems with staff capacity to support health plan risk adjustment and quality programs

It doesn't have to be this way. A flexible, provider-first solution that integrates with your EHR and other clinical platforms can help you spend more time with patients and deliver positive patient outcomes – without the hassle.



Get to know Excel Medical Center

Excel Medical Center is made up of 14 primary care offices in Philadelphia, with about 25 primary care physicians and nurse practitioners. Excel serves approximately 20,000 patients. 65% are dual population (Medicare/Medicaid). The organization is planning an expansion with new locations and additional staff, made possible in part through digital integrations that have saved time and improved care delivery.



Opening up new possibilities at Excel Medical Center

Excel Medical Center in Philadelphia enrolled in the Optum® In-Office Assessment Program in 2020, and transitioned to athenahealth EHR in 2022. Optum was able to integrate with Excel's EHR, creating a more streamlined workflow for Excel and providing access to patient insights and alerts from Optum data and analytics. Excel quickly recognized the In-Office Assessment Program's potential to support physicians and staff.

A customized approach to integration

Optum health care advocate, Shadina John, worked closely with clinical and administrative staff at Excel Medical Center to assess the practice's needs, resources and goals. Together, they devised new processes and workflows to improve Excel's digital capabilities. Shadina meets monthly with Excel's Director of Operations, Aisha Fulton, and Andrew Gaston, RN, the practice's Population Health Specialist. As a team, they review utilization lists, address issues related to health risk assessment submissions, refine the digital integration process and optimize workflows.

By integrating athenahealth with Optum, practices have access to advanced solutions and capabilities that reduce administrative burdens, including:

- Data that follows the patient at each point of care, providing a complete picture of the patient's health and helping to improve outcomes
- Industry-leading data and analytics that proactively identify risk-suspected conditions
- Preprogrammed alerts for risk-suspected conditions at the point of care
- Automated submission to close risk-suspected conditions and automated chart and notes extraction

“Optum is a great partner that helps us look at the metrics and find solutions for patients enrolled in the In-Office Assessment Program...Together, we're keeping high-risk patients as healthy as possible and minimizing rehospitalizations and unnecessary ED visits.”

Theodore Burden, MD, MBA, Chief Medical Officer, Excel Medical Center

“The automated chart notifications prompt us to do tests and interventions that might not have occurred to us. We're able to recognize red flags and diagnose conditions early when they are easier and less expensive to treat.”

Andrew Gaston, RN,
Excel Medical Center

Patient success story

With more than 10,000 high-risk/high-cost patients, Excel relies on population data to manage chronic conditions and detect emerging health issues promptly. A recent patient experience illustrates how the In-Office Assessment Program supports their care efforts.



The patient, a 61-year-old woman with multiple comorbidities, came to Excel for a check-up with her primary care physician. She initially reported no concerning symptoms. However, the physician received a notification from the EHR, prompted by Optum data, for a suspected condition based on clinical evidence resulting from previous treatment for peripheral vascular disease (PVD).

Based on the information in the alert, the physician asked a few probing questions to determine the status of her PVD condition. When the patient mentioned occasional leg pain, the physician performed a QuantaFlo™ test right in the office. The results indicated a possible problem, so the physician referred her to a vascular surgeon. The patient ended up needing surgery to correct a right popliteal total occlusion. Because her physician caught the issue early, she is now doing well.

Without the notification, the physician says he may have overlooked the previous diagnosis. Early intervention prevented the patient's condition from deteriorating and she was able to avoid the need for emergency care.

Optum suspecting logic and smart analytics is 98% accurate in flagging suspected conditions



The In-Office Assessment Program offers multiple digital modalities, including EHR integration, native workflow, and the Practice Assist portal, designed to deliver clinically validated patient data and insights to clinicians at the point of care, with little or no disruption to established practice workflows. Having easy access to a clear and accurate picture of patient health helps manage clinical decisions, which can lead to better outcomes.

For more information, contact your health care advocate or visit optum.com/IOAProviders



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