Keeping it wired

Growing nonprofit health system replaced EHR, consolidated systems and processes with dual IT initiatives culminating in a quiet cutover
Keeping it wired

An award-winning, rapidly growing nonprofit health system navigates major construction activities, mergers and acquisitions to sustain its trajectory. Its goal is to continually provide new services and value to patients — value that’s only possible through new technologies, from back-end systems to smart beds to mobile solutions for providers.

A hard deadline for EHR

The organization acquired a major hospital and converted its electronic health record (EHR) system from Cerner Millennium to Siemens Soarian Clinicals. Then, Cerner purchased Siemens. A year later, in mid-2016, the organization had to move back to Cerner Millennium and unify patient records across acute and ambulatory care.

To minimize the impact on end users and operations, the choice was made to integrate the new clinical system with Soarian Financials instead of replacing it. A big-bang go-live was planned for early 2018, and many other downstream projects relied on this initiative meeting its timeline. Delays would cause substantial cost overruns and block other information systems projects with new facilities.

Add some wow while you’re in there

The health system, like most, had multiple solutions, vendors, workflows and processes. To continue growing and provide a WOW experience to patients, the IT footprint needed to be simplified. This launched an initiative to create one record per patient, on a single system, for acute and ambulatory care. It required consolidating applications and standardizing practices across the enterprise. Any overruns from this initiative would jeopardize the EHR project and its various dependencies.

Getting with the program

The healthcare organization asked Atos, a global leader in digital transformation, to plan and execute the implementation of Cerner Millennium and the one-patient, one-record initiative. This mammoth undertaking involved replacing not only Soarian Clinicals but also a host of other legacy applications:

- Laboratory
- Emergency department
- Radiology
- Surgery
- Pharmacy
- Behavioral health
- Ambulatory urgent care and occupational health clinics

The two companies began by developing a legacy support plan, a program governance process and a program resource plan.

Building the team

One of Atos’ first tasks was to establish a strong team to support the health system’s legacy applications and free its fulltime resources to learn and focus on the new EHR implementation.

Eight people on the team were dedicated to supporting SoftLab, Syngo radiology, SIS surgery system, IBEX and MedHost for emergency services, plus informatics and Soarian Meaningful Use efforts. Atos also backfilled project management for a variety of IT projects outside of the one-patient, one-record initiative. Atos brought in a program director and seven of the thirteen project managers needed for the project. Rounding out the team were two dozen Atos analysts covering a variety of Cerner Millennium applications. Subject matter experts from the health system were added to the project team for the program’s entirety, from requirements definitions through 45 days after go-live. It was imperative to have dedicated staff for the duration of the project and enough resources to complete the design, build, test, train and activation phases.

July 2016
Began EHR and one-patient, one-record projects

June 2016 - January 2018
Replaced 10 legacy systems including laboratory, ED, radiology, surgery, pharmacy, behavioral health, ambulatory urgent care, occupational health
**Governance**

A governance process was defined with four groups meeting regularly:

1. **Interdisciplinary Governing Council:** Most decisions were made in a monthly forum of program leadership, project managers, collaborative members and department operational leaders.

2. **Enterprise Executive Steering Committee:** Program leadership met monthly with the healthcare organization’s senior leadership to review progress and make adjustments or decisions to remove obstacles and move the program forward.

3. **Program Steering Committee:** Decisions that could not be made at the Interdisciplinary Governing Council were reviewed monthly by a committee of program leaders and operational leaders from acute care and ambulatory facilities.

4. **Physician Advisory Group:** Decisions regarding physician use, design, build and workflow were made by a group including the chief medical informatics officer and physicians representing most specialties.

**Tools**

In addition to the resources and governance process, Atos brought tools to the program:

1. **Integration Testing Readiness Assessment:** A status check for design decisions, data collection worksheets, build, interfaces, testing scripts and devices. This assessment determined that the team was not ready to begin integrated testing as planned in its original timeline. The beginning of integrated testing had to be delayed a few weeks, so the team collapsed the time between integration test cycles to accommodate the go-live date. This was a risk that was managed by the PMO, and it paid off with three rounds of integration testing.

2. **Go-Live Readiness Assessments:** A process for reporting progress in preparation for go-live. The assessment process was completed by each team at 150, 120, 90, 60, 30 and 15 days from go-live. At the 60-day report, the team made the final go/no-go decision. The project was a go.

3. **Technical Dress Rehearsal (TDR):** An event to help minimize the most common problems of any go-live. This organization’s TDR prevented issues related to printing, scanning and end-user security/permissions from diluting the focus of the support team during the actual go-live.

4. **Cutover Plan:** A detail of all steps required, including start and end times, for the pre-conversion, night-of-cutover and post-conversion phases. This plan served as the master plan and enabled the healthcare organization’s leadership to manage each step of the cutover without misstep.

**Going live and moving on**

The organization went live with Cerner Millennium integrated with Soarian Financials on the targeted date. The program was completed on time and on budget. And, only 30 days after go-live, the hospital network was back to normal operations — but with a significantly smaller IT footprint.

**Recognizing 90% savings**

One of the program’s major goals was electronic physician documentation. To help with physician adoption, program governance prioritized voice-recognition software as a late addition to the scope of work. Pre-conversion, three transcription vendors had individual interfaces to the legacy EHR system. Post-conversion, with the new voice-recognition software, only one transcription vendor is needed. Not only are physicians more likely to adopt electronic documentation, but the capability also decreased transcription use by 90%.

This partnership has been successful for many years, and this multi-year implementation has solidified the relationship into the future. As the healthcare organization continues its growth and market expansion, Atos will be there to assist wherever needed. Both companies attribute the enduring relationship to strong collaboration, quick response to emerging needs, absolute candor and hard-earned trust.
About Atos

Atos is a global leader in digital transformation with over 110,000 employees in 73 countries and annual revenue of over € 11 billion.

European number one in Cloud, Cybersecurity and High-Performance Computing, the Group provides end-to-end Orchestrated Hybrid Cloud, Big Data, Business Applications and Digital Workplace solutions. The group is the Worldwide Information Technology Partner for the Olympic & Paralympic Games and operates under the brands Atos, Atos Syntel, and Unify. Atos is a SE (Societas Europaea), listed on the CAC40 Paris stock index.

The purpose of Atos is to help design the future of the information technology space. Its expertise and services support the development of knowledge, education as well as multicultural and pluralistic approaches to research that contribute to scientific and technological excellence. Across the world, the group enables its customers, employees and collaborators, and members of societies at large to live, work and develop sustainably and confidently in the information technology space.

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