

Customer Spotlight

Expanding Access For A Growing Network



About the Customer

Sentara Healthcare is no stranger to making necessary changes for the benefit of their community. Back in 2011, after determining there was a need to upgrade their privileging and credentialing processes, they successfully implemented EchoCredentialing. That transition helped Sentara Healthcare navigate one of the most taxing healthcare crises the world has faced - the COVID-19 pandemic. But with mergers on the horizon, there came a need for a more robust solution to facilitate collaboration between all of Sentara Healthcare's new and existing entities.



Overview

Sentara Healthcare was first established in 1888 as a 25-bed retreat for the sick in Norfolk, VA. Over the past 135 years, they have grown to be one of the largest not-for-profit integrated healthcare delivery systems in the Mid-Atlantic region of the US. Recognized nationally for clinical quality and safety, Sentara Healthcare is strategically focused on innovation and creating an extraordinary healthcare experience for its patients and members. Their mission to improve health every day is reflected in their commitment to keeping their patients safe and informed, treating them with dignity and respect, and working together to provide the best care.

In January of 2023, Sentara Healthcare acquired AvMed, a not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Miami, FL. AvMed provides commercial group, individual, and Medicare Advantage coverage to more than 200,000 members.

But Sentara Healthcare's growth didn't stop there. Shortly after, in conjunction with Infinite Computer Solutions, OptaFi, LLC. was created, a joint venture focused on supporting healthcare companies to deliver digital health. OptaFi provides a reliable pathway to digital health by leveraging cloud migration expertise and an in-depth understanding of healthcare operations, security, compliance, and technology.

Attempting to meet the needs of multiple divisions housed under one umbrella, quickly exposed some shortcomings in Sentara Healthcare's credentialing and privileging processes. But as an organization committed to innovation, Sentara Healthcare quickly set out to make the necessary changes needed to service their growing organization.

[29,000+]

Employees

[5000+]

Affiliate Providers



Key Challenges

Antiquated processes: Because of the multiple mergers and acquisitions that took place, standardization across all the divisions became one of their biggest challenges. Four governing bodies within a single system meant a single CVO was tasked with processing applications for 11 of 12 hospitals. And within those 12 hospitals, there were 11 separate medical staffs to work with. There were variations between delineation of privileges (DOPs) being used and the criteria within them, and each of the individual medical staff committees met on different dates. With no standardization in place, the work became cumbersome and unmanageable.

Onboarding challenges: Hand in hand with standardization came complications with onboarding. The real problem Sentara Healthcare faced lay in onboarding the same provider at multiple facilities.

Privileging predicament: Privileging providers is a complex process in itself, maintaining multiple processes across varying facilities wasn't sustainable.

“We were drawn to a solution like CredentialStream because of its ability to standardize delineation of privileges at any given time, a functionality we desperately needed.”

Carla Allen, Medical Staff Coordinator, Sentara Healthcare



Solution

EchoCredentialing was a great solution for Sentara Healthcare at first. It empowered them to go paperless and helped auto-process their workflows, reports, and rosters while keeping accurate records. But with the acquisition of AvMed and the creation of OptaFi, Sentara Healthcare was having problems with duplicate records, complications with system-wide updates, and a lack of transparency within the application process. CredentialStream® was chosen as the solution to address those issues, and more.

Validated, integrated, and continuously updated

vSource data tables: This provides Sentara Healthcare with information about facilities, schools, payers, and license boards that is up-to-date, accurate, and reliable, helping them avoid errors and duplicate data.

Ability to apply changes in batches: Sentara Healthcare will now be able to provide the same updated document to multiple providers in a single step, as opposed to needing to do so for each individual.

Ability to standardize documents and release forms:

CredentialStream's continuously updated, best-practice content libraries, and industry-leading data sets make standardizing documents across all divisions easier and seamless

The Provider Hub: With a centralized portal, Sentara Healthcare can offer providers and clinical leaders a direct connection to key credentialing processes and information, and the ability to maintain their own profiles, preferences, and much more.



Implementation

Sentara Healthcare knew it was necessary to build a team of dedicated resources for seamless integration. They designated a dedicated IT Manager and several executive sponsors from the IT and Medical Staff departments to focus on the switch to CredentialStream®. They appointed a Process Improvement Engineer to lead all meetings with specialty representatives to keep all team members on track and accountable for DOP approval. Selected team members worked together in tracking and documenting all decisions to ensure the project moved at the desired pace. They also:

- Created a data map so that all existing data could be easily found within EchoCredentialing in preparation for migration
- Worked on code conversions so both systems could communicate seamlessly
- Simultaneously embarked on a privileging project in order to standardize their DOPs from the get-go

“Overall, it’s been a positive experience making this transition, though it’s been challenging with so many puzzle pieces to keep track of, especially with team members on both sides. I’m excited to see the positive impact CredentialStream will have on the provider experience across the organization.”

Carla Allen, Medical Staff Coordinator, Sentara Healthcare



Looking Ahead

Sentara Healthcare is still in the process of migrating its data from EchoCredentialing to CredentialStream. As they look ahead, they plan to continue learning and growing with the technological advancements that come their way. They are committed to pushing their limits and thinking outside the box while using all the features CredentialStream can offer to the fullest extent. As they complete the migration process, they are looking forward to:

Standardized DOPs: Using CredentialStream’s library of best-practice privilege forms to standardize their DOPs. With data at their fingertips, there will be fewer questions from the CVO, leadership, and physicians.

Improved customer service: Providers have access to more accurate information regarding what is required of them, leading to improved levels of satisfaction on both the provider and patient side.

Process improvements: With less time spent working in a non-centralized system, Sentara Healthcare and its acquired facilities will be able to credential and privilege providers more quickly leading to overall efficiencies.

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