CASE STUDY

Altura Lowers its Call Volume and Increases Patient Satisfaction Using Artera

ALTURA
CENTERS FOR HEALTH
a california health+ center

In 2000, Altura became an FQHC and is governed by a Volunteer Community Board of Directors, the majority of whom are also patients.

- 8 locations
- 50 providers
- 12 specialties
- 140,000 patient visits per year

The Results

10% Decrease in call volume	**10%** Increase in appointment confirmations
2x Patient satisfaction doubled	**22%** Decrease in no-shows

Artera provides the FQHC with a more efficient way for their patients to connect.

An overburdened system

With 140,000 annual patient visits and tens of thousands of phone calls per year, Altura Centers for Health needed a messaging system that worked. Their legacy vendor could not handle Altura's high volume of patient requests.

"Managing the portal was quite cumbersome because it didn't work directly with [our EHR] NextGen," said Manuel Pedroza, Altura's Chief Information Officer. "Basically, it was just spitting out a report [of patient responses] that our staff would still have to review, then update in the IT system accordingly."

Because their patients had no other way to reach them, Altura was also fielding high call volumes, which meant patients were also spending too much time on hold. "We have an underserved population," Pedroza said. "Our patients are busy, they don't have time to wait on the phone to request an appointment for their son or daughter."

All of this was taking a toll on their patient satisfaction scores which were hovering at 2 out of 5. Altura needed a solution that would cut down on calls and provide another avenue for patients to connect. They also needed something that would work well without continual maintenance or input.

Fewer calls, more satisfied patients

When Altura found Artera™, they were impressed. "We wanted a system that didn't require much innovation to use, and Artera fit our requirements," said David Ramirez, Altura's Clinical Support Technician. In addition, Artera would automatically sync with Altura's EHR in real time, eliminating the need for manual updates.

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"It's very user-friendly," said Pedroza. "We had a successful implementation without any major issues, which I can't say about many IT systems." When Artera went live, things started to change. Altura received 10 percent fewer calls the next year because so many patients were texting. "Our patients love (Artera). It's overdue; we should have been on this a long time ago," said Ramirez. "Patients can do multiple things, send a text, and not have to be waiting around for a response." After using Artera, Altura's patient satisfaction scores doubled from 2 to over 4.

Meeting goals and delighting stakeholders

Because their patients found the texting platform convenient, Altura's confirmation rate rose by 10 percent. No-show rates dropped from 18 to 14 percent—a 22 percent decrease. Altura's staff also liked Artera. "Seeing the call volume drop by a pretty significant number was one of the key things that our staff were happy about," said Ramirez. In addition, Pedroza said, the text messages were simply easier to work with, "One agent can manage multiple conversations in the Artera platform." This meant that staff members had time to schedule more appointments and attend to other patient needs.



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>
> **David Ramirez**
> Clinical Support Technician

The future for the FQHC and Artera

Currently, Altura uses Artera for scheduling, but they have plans to get the most out of the platform. The FQHC intends to use Artera for pre-registration and patient insurance updates, implement a web-based payment option accessible through the Artera platform, and to start a text-message campaign reminding patients to pay their bills.

Altura is also interested in reaching out to new patients who might be eligible for their services. Pedroza said that the willingness of the Artera team to help with new use cases has been a major plus for the health system. We like the engagement with Artera™; it's very personal," he said. "They're willing to work with us on these projects. There's nothing better than a simple program that just works."

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