

# Surviving vs. Thriving:

*How One RHC Made Change Work for Them*



## When the Status Quo Isn't Good Enough

Having recently obtained their Rural Health Clinic (RHC) designation, a clinic in Northeast Alabama was happy with their current EHR and billing vendor. However, after conversations with industry consultants, the physician-owners came to understand that their current vendor has a history of struggling in the rural market. Especially when it comes to maximizing reimbursement for RHCs. Being new to the RHC model without any in-house knowledge of the nuances of running and billing for RHCs, the physician owners knew they had to bring in someone who could fill the rural health knowledge gaps.

In addition to their uncertainty, the clinic was experiencing personnel changes and preparing for the upcoming cold and flu season. Another complicating factor is that the physicians also owned a Family Medicine practice that did not require rural billing expertise. At first, all of this made them question whether now was the right time to implement a new EHR. However, the physicians' lack of confidence in their current EHR and billing vendor for the RHC was at a tipping point. They needed to take action.

## Vendor Selection Process

The driving force for their search was RHC billing support. After a few years on their current system, the newly-minted RHC was comfortable with their existing clinical workflows and decided they wanted those to stay the same, if possible. The physicians hoped they could find a system that offered the same clinical workflows and features as their current solution but also included the much needed expertise of rural health billing. Once the search criteria was established, the practice engaged with five of the leading ambulatory EHR vendors to find the best match.



## Clinic Overview

- Recently Certified Rural Health Clinic (RHC) located in Northeast Alabama
- 2 Providers, 2 Nurse Practitioners
- Content with existing vendor's clinical workflows and product functionality
- Concerned about learning RHC guidelines and reimbursement workflows being handled by current vendor

## Choosing Azalea Health...

After a thorough search including multiple phone and face-to-face meetings with vendors, as well as the advice of a trusted consultant, the physicians selected Azalea Health. Initially, the plan was to adopt a new EHR for the RHC and leave the Family Medicine practice on their current system. After all, the affiliated practice was happy with their solution. But after learning about the ability to share patient data across both locations and similar clinical workflows, the physicians decided to move both clinics. Three key factors drove their decision to choose Azalea.

### *Rural Health Experience*

The need for a partner who understands the intricacies of rural billing was what prompted this Northeast Alabama RHC to conduct a vendor search, so it's not surprising that this was the key factor in choosing Azalea Health for EHR and revenue cycle management services. Staffed with a team of certified billers, Azalea Health specializes in managing the revenue cycle for rural facilities. Given the company's focus on helping Rural Health Clinics, Azalea developed its own RHC billing certification program (long before one existed in the market). Because of this level of training, Azalea understands how to secure the greatest reimbursement for RHCs. Plus, Azalea's Professional Services expert also helps companies achieve and maintain their RHC certification and optimize workflows. This experience gave the clinics confidence that Azalea could help them navigate the nuances of rural billing better than any of the other vendors evaluated.

### *Billing Experience*

Given the lack of experience with RHC billing and the personnel changes, the RHC also needed an easy-to-use system. Fortunately, Azalea Health started as a billing company in rural Georgia, but quickly built a software platform to help make the billers more efficient. Since the solution was built by billers for billers, the solution is comprehensive yet easy to use... meaning that clinics can capture revenue more quickly. Not to mention, Azalea Practice Management makes it easy to do split-claim billing and process UB-04s, both of which are critical to RHC billing.

### *Trusted Advisor*

Trust is important in every relationship, particularly one as significant as the one between a clinic and their EHR software provider. Azalea demonstrated their trustworthiness and reliability throughout the sales process - from multiple on-site visits to a recommendation from a trusted consultant who had previous experience working with Azalea. These interactions demonstrated that Azalea was a company the clinics could trust and depend on which gave them the confidence to select Azalea as their EHR partner.

Because of Azalea's domain expertise and experience, we know that Rural Health Clinic billing is unique and critical to the financial success of the clinic. By offering an efficient clinical workflow and above industry average revenue cycle management services, Azalea Health won the deal for both the Rural Health Clinic and the Family Medicine practice.

## Questions to Ask Yourself...

- Is our clinic undergoing operational changes that may/may not be supported by our current vendor?
- Do we have a high-level of confidence that our vendor understands our unique business needs?
- Is our clinic operating at peak efficiency?

If you answered no to any of these questions, it might be time to challenge the status quo within your clinic. Looking at your options never hurt and who knows, you might just find something that serves your clinic's needs better!

