



# Remote Installation, Full Interoperability

## How COVID Led to a New EHR and State HIE Connectivity for DeWitt

DeWitt Hospital is a rural emergency hospital in DeWitt, Arkansas. In 2020, it was a critical access hospital that provided emergency and outpatient services for rural Southeastern Arkansas.

It has a radiology, laboratory, and respiratory departments, an emergency room. It also operates a nursing home attached to the hospital, the Ferguson Rural Health Clinic, the Burlison Medical Clinic, and local ambulance and paramedic service.

When Brian Miller joined DeWitt Hospital as CEO in January 2019, the hospital’s existing EHR was sunsetting and the facility had nine months to find a replacement. Miller and staff knew they needed a system that was light on maintenance, updates and support; was able to adjust to different workflows and care levels; and was supported by a team willing to be a partner to the hospital, rather than be just another vendor.

### Partnering with Azalea Health

DeWitt chose Azalea Health because it offered a cloud-based system that minimized IT spend and lift, reduced the need for

training and expensive consulting services, and offered an interoperable approach that enabled DeWitt to connect to the SHARE HIE, while also connecting its facilities, so it could easily share patient data across its own network, Miller explained.

“The idea was simple: Azalea would deliver a system that limited the amount of upfront and long-term spend,

### DeWitt Hospital & Nursing Home

**Location:** DeWitt, Arkansas

**Providers:** 16 +

**Staff:** Multiple

**Services:** Hospital, RHC, ER, medical clinic, nursing home, mobile MRI, sleep studies, and more

**Azalea EHR user since:** May 2020

[dewitthealth.org](http://dewitthealth.org)

#### Before Azalea EHR

- **EHR being discontinued by the vendor**
- On-premise EHR that required **heavy maintenance**
- **No ability to share patient data** with the state health information exchange

#### With Azalea EHR

- **A single cloud-based platform** that requires little, if any, maintenance
- **Full interoperability** with Arkansas’ SHARE HIE for sharing patient data
- **Customizable workflows and a unified view** of hospital and clinic patients

“We were coming from an on-premise system that demanded time and dollars to maintain. The interface was old and workflows were static. The idea of a cloud-based solution that we could quickly integrate into our existing technology ecosystem with very little lift was something totally new for the organization. And it was an approach we very much needed.”

— Brian Miller, CEO

empowered our hospital staff to customize the solution based on their clinical workflow, and unlocked our data so that we could have a unified view of the patient regardless of the care setting,” Miller said.

## The Importance of Interoperability

Azalea also played a big role in connecting DeWitt to the SHARE HIE. DeWitt is part of the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership (ARHP), a network of 14 rural hospitals that pools resources to better meet the unique needs of patients in their rural communities.

When the pandemic started, Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield came to ARHP and provided the funding to connect all the rural hospitals in the partnership to the SHARE program.

For DeWitt, Azalea was instrumental in facilitating its connection to the SHARE HIE. With the vendor’s help, DeWitt became one of the first providers in Southern Arkansas to be connected to the SHARE program.

“The SHARE program has led to more informed care transitions between DeWitt and other local community clinic providers,” Miller explained.

“We use the exchange to share episodic admission/-discharge/transfer data, discharge summaries, radiology reports, image narratives, laboratory results, prescribed medications and clinical procedures. Our clinic gets 24-hour daily reports on all our patients, and we get notified in

*“We often transfer patients to other hospitals, and their medical data needs to transfer with them. On top of that, a lot of our patients have chronic conditions and receive health services from multiple providers, and their data was fragmented across each provider they receive treatment from.”*

— Brian Miller, CEO

real time when any patient has an ED or inpatient discharge or if they test positive for COVID-19.”

Since adopting Azalea, DeWitt made the move from being a critical access hospital to a rural emergency hospital. You can read Brian’s take on the transition in [The Journey to the Rural Emergency Hospital Model](#).

DeWitt’s story of migrating to the Azalea EHR was originally published in [Healthcare IT News](#).

*“Azalea simplified the process and worked to ensure integration into our existing radiology and lab solutions. They worked across our groups, including nursing, registration and IT, to make sure everyone was aligned, informed and prepared on Day One. Azalea has been a very supportive and attentive partner, and we still meet with them twice a week.”*

— Brian Miller, CEO

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