

# Behavioral health provider switches EHR to prep for accountable care

By Joseph Goedert | Published February 09 2017, 4:20pm EST

HealthWest, a community mental health organization serving Muskegon County in west Michigan, recently selected its fourth electronic health record system, a move predicated on better supporting patients and the staff during the era of accountable and value-based care.

The organization used its previous EHR for more than five years, but the state of Michigan has changed its behavioral health processes, and HealthWest needed additional functionality that includes better connectivity with medical providers to support accountable care, says David McElfish, chief information officer.

“The goal is to have an integrated medical and behavioral health record and exchange data with primary care physicians throughout the county,” he adds. “The result in the end is giving better care to our customers.”

HealthWest engaged in a six-month vendor selection process and recently settled on the Cx360 EHR from Core Solutions. Clinicians and staff liked an interface on the new records system that gives information views on all clients or just one client, offers more relevant information on lookup screens, is more intuitive and has easier workflow, according to McElfish.

Other vendor candidates did not offer a managed care module that included electronic billing and claims management, and would

not allow HealthWest’s in-house information technology team to develop add-on screens for reporting purposes.

HealthWest also wanted a patient portal, seamless eligibility verification checks and appointment schedules viewable on mobile devices, since most staff members work in the community. Further, HealthWest has been working to automate more processes so that data moves in real time, another initiative that Cx360 could support.

When it came down to a final pick among two products with comparable price tags, it was the additional offerings and greater flexibility that Core Solutions offered that sealed the deal.

“As HealthWest grew, there was no way to continue to have manual processes,” McElfish concludes. “We needed functionality to receive local provider claims electronically rather than on paper.”

An implementation kick-off meeting is planned for February 22. HealthWest initially was looking to go live in October, but concerns that the timetable may be too aggressive makes a January 2018 go-live look more likely, McElfish says.