



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

High-Five Go Live

Secrets of a Successful Implementation

Executive Support and Collaboration Are Critical

A non-profit midwestern health plan faced a unique challenge in moving its 1 million-plus members to a single care management platform. The clock was ticking. They were working on two different and distinct clinical systems that were connected to four separate claims systems. One was due for an upgrade and the other was being sunsetted by the vendor. They needed a unified, consistent model of care for various risk levels. To accomplish this, the health plan signed on to use the Altruista Health GuidingCare® care management technology platform in 2019. This customer looked for a strong collaborative partnership and found it in Altruista. Altruista works to make every implementation a High-Five Go Live event in which teams celebrate with “high fives” on completion.

Pandemic Presents Special Challenges

An Altruista Health customer already had a steep challenge with a tight timeline. Then a pandemic struck. Strong partnership was a key to the plan's successful, three-phase implementation.

“In the beginning, we were asking ourselves, ‘how in the heck do we do this?’” said the health plan’s clinical director. “It was really a dilemma.”



Over a period of months, this Altruista Health customer would demonstrate exactly how to pull off a software implementation of great scale and complexity and come through it with flying colors.





Strong Executive Support



Collaboration



Project Management



The Right Team



Respect



Trust

The first critical element to their efforts was to have strong executive support, and fortunately, the health plan's team had that from the CEO and down through the ranks. The plan's senior vice president of health services made a presentation to executive management and board of directors to explain what GuidingCare was all about.

The health plan's executive sponsor for the project reported that there was a **"wonderful collaborative tone," which was key to working together.** "This was complex and big and everyone was aligned for the same outcome – a successful implementation," she said. She noted the steering committee brought in executive ownership from a broad base of departments, including key leaders from operations, member experience and network, well as establishing a core implementation team. Altruista's chief medical officer was the Altruista executive sponsor for the project.

"This health plan was a great partner with strong leadership," said an Altruista implementation executive. "Their leadership really understands their front-line work. They are strong communicators."

"We brought in case management, utilization management, appeals and grievances and IT," the plan's clinical director said. "And from those units, we were very strategic in who we chose because we needed to understand how prior decisions had been made. **And, I can't stress this enough – we brought in an experienced and savvy project manager. That was key.**"

Noting that there's a tendency in organizations for workgroups to fall into siloes, the clinical director said it really increased everyone's respect and appreciation for everyone else to understand the others' roles. They also looked for people who could explain how prior decisions on day-to-day operations had been made.

The next key ingredient was trust. With everyone bringing different kinds of knowledge to the table, it was important to have an environment where people could freely ask questions, the director noted. "We established a charter for our group and set expectations for key behaviors. We made sure we were present for each other and assumed good intentions on the part of everyone involved." There were some tough decisions to be made.

"Altruista asked us about our pain points and what we really hoped to achieve," the director said. "We made the tradeoffs and hard choices as a team. "Altruista was a great partner and that was important when it came to hard conversations. We had to be able to speak openly."

As a result of asking probing questions, "Altruista Health really developed a deep understanding of our business model and process," she said.

Onboarding Three Waves of Increasing Complexity

The team decided to make the **transformation to GuidingCare in three waves**, determined by line of business, starting with a small population and a lesser number of staff working in that area. The idea was to start with something simple and see what lessons could be applied to the more complex waves two and three.

WAVE ONE

Wave One was the plan's smallest population of commercial members, and they successfully rolled out modules for this group in January 2020 in care management, utilization management, appeals and grievances, population health, Mobile Clinician, and reporting and business rules.

WAVE TWO

Wave Two was even more complex and required more planning and configuration. "It was so helpful to have done Wave One at that point," the director said. Wave Two was the transition of Medicare, Medicaid and additional aspects of the commercial business to the same GuidingCare modules as Wave One. It was completed in April 2020.

WAVE THREE

Finally, it was time for Wave Three, the most complex and largest of the three waves. "We set up a command center and started meeting twice a day right before the Go Live," the director said. They brought the MPHS, individual family business and new Medicare expansion onto GuidingCare in September 2020. The same modules were implemented as in earlier waves.



Lessons Learned

Shortly after the first wave, the COVID-19 pandemic went into full swing and this created new challenges. For one thing, remote working eliminated the casual hallway conversations that are a helpful part of the work day. The team scrambled and kept working at it and were able to move the hallway conversations into video chat rooms – and still get the job done.

“This was a case study in great collaboration and great teamwork,” the plan’s clinical director said. “It truly does take a village and in times of COVID, that village must perform just as well virtually.”

Tips For A Successful Implementation

- ✓ Expect the unexpected
- ✓ Determine what’s critical to do first
- ✓ Assume good intentions in others
- ✓ Go slow on business rules
- ✓ Keep your sense of humor
- ✓ Celebrate milestones & successes

“Altruista was an incredible partner, great collaborator and provided great teamwork,” the clinical director reported. “I have great appreciation for that. We have no regrets about choosing GuidingCare.”