

Neighborhood Health Plan Improves Processes, Complies With HIPAA

HIPAA Program Gets a Healthy Start With Keane's Program Management Solution

Abstract

Neighborhood Health Plan (NHP), the fifth largest health plan in Massachusetts, was committed to continuously providing the highest quality healthcare to its members while responding to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations. Due to the complexities of an enterprise-wide HIPAA initiative, NHP required a dedicated and industry-proven management approach to mitigate risk in order to successfully achieve compliance. To augment its internal resources, which were simultaneously focused on strategic initiatives, NHP partnered with Keane for a program management solution. Leveraging world-class project management capabilities and HIPAA expertise, Keane's solution provided the oversight and best practices to enable a smooth implementation of its program, ensuring that NHP is on track to achieve compliance, rapidly and cost-effectively.

Client

Neighborhood Health Plan (NHP) is a not-for-profit health maintenance organization (HMO), founded by the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers and the Greater Boston Forum for Health Action in 1986. NHP is committed to providing high-quality clinical programs and improved healthcare access for individuals and families with limited income, on Medicaid, or that have challenging medical conditions. Its mission is to provide healthcare systems that are member-focused, quality-driven, and community-based. NHP serves over 120,000 members state-wide through an extensive network of community health centers, specialists, and programs.

Challenge

To address the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act's (HIPAA's) Transaction and Code Sets (TCS) and Privacy regulations, NHP needed to implement an enterprise-wide compliance program. After developing a plan that outlined how HIPAA could be strategically leveraged to reduce costs and increase operational efficiencies, NHP recognized that implementing the regulations effectively and efficiently would require rigorous project management practices and dedicated resources. Due to the critical nature and complexity of this project, NHP sought a partnership to keep the project on track. Based on Keane's industry-leading project management methodology and HIPAA expertise, NHP selected Keane. Keane implemented and managed a HIPAA Program Management Office (PMO) to provide the visibility and management expertise needed to ensure the success of NHP's compliance initiative.

Solution

Leveraging world-class project management techniques, Keane's solution provided a single point of contact, accountability, and coordination for the entire HIPAA program, while instilling best practices and improved processes throughout NHP's IT organization. Keane worked with NHP to verify and validate its current progress toward compliance, determine existing gaps, and develop a strategy and work plan for continued progress. With the initial validation and planning completed, the Keane-NHP team established a HIPAA PMO, which facilitated task prioritization and efficient project execution through:

"By leveraging Keane's HIPAA PMO services, we were able to integrate best practices and process improvements into our organization and technologies. These improvements set the standard for the delivery of future initiatives, enabling NHP to provide the best possible healthcare to our members and services to our providers."

Fran Hinckley, Chief Information Officer,
Neighborhood Health Plan

- Consistent communications through status meetings and project reporting
- The creation of documentation standards such as requirements tracking, version control, and change management, across all sub-projects
- Risk identification, tracking, and mitigation through Keane's Project Risk Assessment Method (PRAM) and Change Control
- Quality and performance measurement through a Project Control and Reporting Process

Keane mapped and documented the process flows across disparate systems that would need to support compliant transactions such as claims and remittance, eligibility, enrollment, referrals, premium payments, and claims status requests. This included facilitating the requirements for a rules-based engine to serve as a front-end for NHP's claims processing system and embed HIPAA transaction formats and business rules. This engine automates the electronic claims approval/rejection process and reduces expenses by preventing non-compliant claims from

Client Story: Non-profit Health Maintenance Organization

entering NHP's system. In addition, Keane developed a companion guide to provide submitters with the information necessary to seamlessly submit claims and transactions electronically to NHP.

Benefits

Keane's PMO solution enabled NHP to meet compliance with HIPAA's Privacy and TCS rules. The Keane-NHP partnership has helped NHP to benefit from:

- Improved claim turnaround time and higher auto-adjudication rates due to automated front-end processing
- Minimal risk through proactive identification and resolution of obstacles
- Effective resource allocation, ensuring that NHP's ability to deliver strategic projects was not impacted
- Enhanced decision-making and performance visibility for senior management by providing an unbiased, data-driven view of the project through metrics, requirements maps, and risk tracking
- Improved customer service to providers through automated status reports which outline the revisions needed for claims to be accepted

Most importantly, the process improvements and best practices established by Keane are entrenched across NHP's organization, providing NHP with a solid foundation for future IT initiatives.

"Keane provided exemplary project management disciplines, proactively identifying, tracking, and resolving potential issues throughout each step of our HIPAA compliance program. As a result, we are well on track to achieve compliance."

Fran Hinckley, Chief Information Officer,
Neighborhood Health Plan

Keane is a global services firm that specializes in enabling transformation of its clients' business and IT functions.