

# FINDING ESSENTIAL TECHNOLOGY TO INTEGRATE NEW SERVICES



## An opportunity to expand and provide more comprehensive care

Management at Wheeler Clinic was feeling the need to integrate new clinical services. For most of its fifty-year history, Wheeler Clinic operated solely as a provider of behavioral healthcare, but it was time for a change.

“We collected data on the number of patients with a primary care physician versus the number without,” recalls Dan Herens, vice president of information technology. “We discovered many people coming in for behavioral health services didn’t have a primary care physician. We realized this represented an opportunity—we could offer both behavioral healthcare and primary care in the same facility.”

Wheeler Clinic is a non-profit, multi-location practice. Expanding selected sites to offer primary care and other specialties—and take on the role of a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)—would enable Wheeler Clinic to better support underserved populations and create a more stable direction for the future.

“It would enable us to meet a healthcare need and also diversify the services we provide,” explains Herens.

Back then, clinicians and staff at Wheeler Clinic used a behavioral-health-specific EHR which could not accommodate these new goals: time to explore new technology.

## THE SOLUTION

### Accommodate the nuances of an integrated practice

At Wheeler Clinic, behavioral healthcare comes in many flavors. They offer:

- Outpatient services with scheduled appointments
- Scheduled in-home services
- Crisis teams that meet the patient any place, any time

## CLIENT PROFILE

### WHEELER CLINIC

- Type of practice—non-profit, community-based, focus on behavioral healthcare; administers care to an underserved population
- Staff—25 prescribing providers, including physicians and advanced practice registered nurses; 350 behavioral health clinicians
- Patients—majority are Medicaid recipients; a smaller percentage are privately insured
- Location—multiple sites; headquartered in central Connecticut with services offered throughout the state

### NEXTGEN SOLUTIONS

- NextGen® Enterprise
  - NextGen Enterprise EHR
  - NextGen Enterprise PM

## HIGHLIGHTS



**Expansion of services;** began operation of three FQHC sites



**Transformation** from solely a behavioral practice to a provider of comprehensive healthcare solutions



**Increased ability** to compete against larger hospital-based systems in a consolidating marketplace

In addition to their need for technology to support these varied approaches to care, adding FQHC sites created the need to accommodate new specialties—primary care, dental, chiropractic, nutrition services, and others. Wheeler Clinic needed a system that could handle the nuances of its current model of care delivery plus new services.

Finding a new EHR began with internet searches, followed up by outreach to vendors for more information and online demos. The choice was narrowed down to four companies who were invited to perform onsite demos.

Decision makers at the clinic implemented a structured approach, asking selected team members to use a standard scale to rate competing systems on features such as ease-of-navigation. The results were tabulated.

“We determined that NextGen Healthcare was the strongest candidate to meet our needs for both behavioral health and primary care,” says Herens.

Features of NextGen® Enterprise that have proven helpful include:

- Flexibility in collection of data—especially important for monitoring patient progress in complex care such as medication-assisted treatment of substance use and addiction disorders
- Flexibility of template editor—enables the clinic to modify out-of-the-box behavioral healthcare content to meet its needs
- Organization of system—delineates which patients are receiving which services—behavioral health, primary care, or integrated care
- Group scheduling model—essential for Wheeler Clinic’s group-based behavioral health programs

“NextGen Healthcare offered the best, most flexible capabilities to meet the needs of our new FQHC sites as well as the behavioral care services we provide.”

**Dan Herens, vice president of information technology**  
Wheeler Clinic

## THE BENEFITS

### **Comprehensive, compassionate behavioral and primary care**

Wheeler Clinic now operates three FQHC sites, which blend behavioral health with primary care, dental care, and other services, under one roof. The practice’s 24 other sites remain focused on behavioral health.

This expansion enables Wheeler Clinic to offer compassionate care at all stages of life to more than 30,000 people across Connecticut. They treat health issues ranging from the common cold to hypertension and other chronic diseases, as well as complex mental health disorders.

Wheeler Clinic has become the state’s most comprehensive nonprofit provider of primary and behavioral health services.

## HOW CAN WE HELP?

Partner with us at **855-510-6398** or **results@nextgen.com**.

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