

CASE STUDY

How the City of Allentown EMS Streamlined Workflows and Improved Financial Outcomes by Converting to Cloud-based Billing Software



THE OPPORTUNITY

The City of Allentown EMS had been using an on-premises billing solution successfully for many years. While the software served its purpose, the billing team relied on a single specialist from the City's government-wide IT team to manage and update software and operating systems and troubleshoot any server and connectivity issues. Because the City didn't have other IT resources familiar with Allentown EMS' billing set-up, there were times when the billing team had to pause for hours or days until their go-to IT person became available. Meanwhile, in early 2020, as cities were locking down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to be able to work remotely came into sharp focus. This was the tipping point that prompted Allentown EMS to begin exploring whether there was an available solution that would preserve the features they relied on while also being responsive to the rapidly changing business environment.

In addition to the on-premises billing solution, the team was paying for a clearinghouse service that placed limits on the number of claims they could submit each month, as well as the number of insurance eligibility checks they could run. They did not have the budget to pay surcharges for overages, so there were months in which they had to forego timely processing and hold over claims to transmit the following month. Allentown EMS decided to look for a modern solution that would meet their billing needs without incremental costs, accelerate time to cash, increase workflow efficiency, and deliver a strong ROI — all while providing the flexibility and remote access their team was looking for.

THE SOLUTION

Fortunately, Allentown EMS received a grant that enabled them to convert their system to the cloud-based solution, ZOLL® Billing, and to purchase laptops so that the billing team could work remotely during times when public health emergencies or inclement weather make getting to the office challenging. ZOLL Billing offered many new, valuable benefits, including access to real-time data, unlimited clearinghouse services at no additional cost, and the ability to automate demographic verification, insurance eligibility, and insurance verification processes. These capabilities transformed many previously time-consuming, manual processes and captured more revenue with a shorter time to cash. And, no longer reliant on an on-premises server and the City's IT team to maintain it, Allentown EMS could now enjoy seamless, regular software updates and trust the team of experts at ZOLL Data Systems to handle security and maintenance tasks in the background.

[SEE THE RESULTS >](#)

“Converting to ZOLL Billing was pretty simple. The ZOLL Data Systems implementation team took care of most of it, and then we just started using it. It's less stressful because you don't have downtime like we used to with the server. There's a better flow, great ease of use, and the speed is awesome. And, we exceeded our budget this year by more than \$50,000 in found revenue.”

— KRISTEN VARGO, BILLING SUPERVISOR

THE RESULTS

The Allentown billing team found the cloud-based software faster to run and easy to use. Submitting claims electronically saves the team time, and they also have found the ZOLL Customer Community useful for requesting feature enhancements and getting input on best practices from their industry peers. Although the team normally works in their Allentown office, when the winter brought heavy snows and COVID surges, staff was able to work productively from home without missing a beat. Their processes have become so much more efficient that the billing clerk — whose previous responsibilities were limited to manual insurance verification and printing, sorting, and inserting physical statements into mailing envelopes — was able to take on new, more advanced responsibilities for the Allentown EMS Chief in the role of department clerk.

ZOLL Billing has also improved reporting. The Chief now has ready access to the information he needs to report on performance to City management and support his budget requests. On a monthly basis, he uses analytic tools to monitor and analyze payer mix, review key performance indicators (KPIs), and identify repeat customers who may benefit from social services outreach.

First year results highlight the immediate impact of converting to ZOLL Billing:



Positive ROI

- Achieved positive ROI of \$22,000 in the first year



Improved Staff Efficiency

- Reduced billing team staff by .5 FTE and redeployed employee for higher-value activities



Increased Collections

- Realized an additional \$52,000 in revenue per year by using automated insurance discovery and verification tools to find billable coverage for presumed self-pay accounts



Reduced Expenses

- Saved \$8,100 annually by eliminating incremental clearinghouse costs
- Saved \$3,600 annually by eliminating most paper statements and postage

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