

KING COUNTY EAP

Improve Security and
Mobility with Penelope Software

an athena software case study



Athena Software Case Study

King County EAP, Seattle

**“It gives so much more security to us and our
HIPAA-protected information.”**

When the EAP providers at King County in Seattle began looking for an electronic case management software system, they were starting from scratch.



The organization, which provides services to thousands of workers within the 17 departments at the County, was coming from a paper-based approach, which

involved simply typing notes into a Word document, printing them out, and keeping them in file cabinets under lock and key.

As EAP Coordinator Heather Steffensen explained, the County was looking for a case management system to help them become more mobile, more secure, and to have more flexible options for service providers, with web-based accessibility of the system a key consideration given the amount of off-site work they perform.

“Having something where we could access it regardless of where we were, as long as we had a computer, phone, and the internet, was something that we really were looking for, and needing, to address those types of issues,” she said.

An Intuitive, Client-Centered Solution

Heather led the six-week online search for a new EAP software system, eventually narrowing down their options to four vendors before selecting Penelope.

“It is more aesthetically pleasing and I love the advanced features that none of the other programs had.”

Differentiating factors that led the County to select Penelope included the system’s intuitive, clean, and modern interface, the easy feel and flow of using the system, and its secure cloud-based hosting model.

As well, Heather pointed to Penelope’s Engage feature, which allows service providers to send forms directly to clients for them to fill out at home or on their mobile device, as an advantage that no other system could match.

“It is more aesthetically pleasing, it got our goals, and I love the advanced features, the Engage feature, that none of the other programs had – being able to email a client or send a form is huge for us,” she said.

“We have such a large base for our clientele and to be able to get that piece done, and not have to worry about uploading and scanning, it’s just so much nicer.”

Deploy At Your Own Pace

Deployment of the system took around seven months, as Heather was managing a full case load while also taking responsibility for implementing Penelope.

Athena’s Professional Services deployment team, led by Amanda McInnis, was happy to take things at Heather’s pace, however, with a focus on getting the implementation right rather than meeting any unrealistic timelines.

“The team was great – Amanda was fantastic. I had felt an internal push to get things going – not even from my organization, but just me myself wanting it to be done – but Amanda said, ‘Let’s not focus on speed, let’s focus on getting it right and really go through and work the process.’”



Heather said using Penelope is a big change from paper and free-form notes, and has provided King County EAP staff with improved collaboration and

transparency. For example, staff no longer need to locate keys for file drawers to access a client's information or history, or to answer basic questions about a colleague's case load, even if that co-worker is out of the office.

Penelope Cloud Hosting Helps Improve Security

Deployment included configuring the system to ensure that their reporting needs were met. A benefit has been that they can now manage their reports more effectively - also, by no longer using paper forms, confidentiality and security has increased exponentially.

With the cloud-based model that Athena provides, Heather and her colleagues have confidence in the safety of the data in the event of a laptop being lost or stolen, for example.

"We don't have physical files any more, and that's huge as far as confidentiality and security for those files," she said.

"To be able to go out into the community, and not have to worry about a file being stolen from a car, or forgetting it some place," is a relief, Heather said. "The security's there if someone were to steal a laptop or something. It gives so much more security to us and our HIPAA-protected information."



Penelope Makes Reporting Easier

Heather said Penelope “has greatly impacted the way we report.”

As an example, King County has 17 internal departments who use EAP services. Previously, the EAP could only report on high-level information, such as how many people from the Department of Transportation used their services, for example, but they could not tell the demographics of who was actually using the services.

They also could not pull any demographic info. other than the department the client worked for. Now, however, they can report on numbers served by multiple demographics, including age, ethnicity, union group, and more. This also helps them see if there are gaps in who is accessing the services, like if a particular demographic group is under-represented.

“Now we’ve got it separated down and it’s easy to run a report on that. We don’t have to go through and look at it and pull it all up, because it’s already put there for us (in Penelope),” Heather said, adding that, “Now, I can just pull the Unique Individuals report, and it’s done.”

“Penelope has been really quite fabulous for us, and just convenient. I can be at home, I can be at the grocery store and pull it up, which is nice.”

Flexible, Configurable, and Mobile-Friendly

Heather said that Penelope’s configurability and flexibility makes it an attractive option and that having software “customized to us is huge, because I know other EAPs have just done different healthcare system-style case management systems, there’s not a ton out there that are specifically aimed toward EAPs.”

And, after a few months of using the system, the benefits of Penelope’s secure, mobile-friendly system are being realized.

“Penelope has been really quite fabulous for us,” Heather said. “And just convenient. I can be at home, I can be at the grocery store or something, and pull it up, which is nice.”