

Northeast Georgia Physicians Group Case Study

# Increased Productivity and Elevated Patient Care Through Workforce Optimization



Northeast Georgia  
**PHYSICIANS GROUP**

Integrated within Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS), Northeast Georgia Physicians Group (NGPG) is one of the largest multi-specialty physician groups in North Georgia, representing more than 20 medical specialties and more than 200 physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners across more than 62 locations, including four urgent care centers.

Communicating staffing needs across a widespread group is a challenge. NGPG's system required hand recording the daily/weekly needs of the 50 physician offices throughout the region into a single book. With a float pool of 20 employees, "the book" at best provided a cumbersome process for filling open shifts, and at worst increased the possibility of errors such as double booking.

"The book created significant inefficiencies for our managers," said Sheila Satterfield, float pool

practice administrator for NGPG. "Our physician offices are spread across a wide geographic region, and there was no way to identify what shifts needed to be filled and where, making it difficult to assign float pool employees to the correct location. Being paper-based also made it difficult to communicate needs and assignments to staff, which was impacting employee satisfaction."

As part of NGHS, the team at NGPG was aware of the similar efficiency challenges that organization

## Problem

Lack of staffing and scheduling technology at Northeast Georgia Physicians Group (NGPG) locations was causing low efficiency levels, a high risk for error and costly double bookings of staff. A lack of data and insight was keeping management from identifying a solution to the problem.

## Solution

As part of Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS), NGPG was aware of the success their parent organization had achieved with tackling many of these same challenges in the past. Drawing inspiration from their accomplishments, NGPG successfully deployed web-based ShiftSelect and ShiftRewards throughout all of their locations including four urgent care centers.

"We believe that the use of technology is critical to achieving optimum patient care. As we increase our footprint to support the growing demand for our services, the expansion of ShiftSelect will play a significant role in ensuring our entire workforce is optimized to always deliver high quality care."

– Bobby Norris, Director, Northeast Georgia Physicians Group

had faced in the past. To address those challenges and meet their goals, NGHS chose to collaborate with API Healthcare and implement API Healthcare ShiftSelect and ShiftRewards solutions. Web-based ShiftSelect promised quick implementation and easy adoption by end-users, allowing NGHS to be up and running quickly. Requiring minimal internal IT support and the ability to fully integrate with third party time and attendance technology made the choice to deploy API Healthcare solutions easy.

By allowing managers to more effectively identify scheduling gaps and communicate needs to credentialed and qualified employees, NGHS was better able to utilize internal staff, nearly eliminating the need for premium labor. ShiftSelect also enabled the organization to realize a significant decrease in overtime within the first couple of years following deployment.

Using the success at NGHS as a model, the team at NGPG made the decision to work with API Healthcare on a plan to tackle their own set of staffing and scheduling challenges.

### Cloud Solution Yields Immediate Results

Because ShiftSelect is web-based, two implementation phases were completed within six weeks, generating an immediate impact on how open shifts were filled.

"After one month, we learned that we had been attempting to fill more than 250 shifts with a float pool of 20 employees," said Satterfield. "Following our second implementation phase, we were able to post 447 open shifts and achieve an 84% fill rate. We have now tripled the number of float pool employees to 72, something that would not have been possible with our manual solution."

## Results

- 62 departments within NGPG use ShiftSelect
- Posted 447 shifts within the first month
- Float pool fill-rate of 84% achieved within the first month
- More than tripled float pool staff from 20 to 72
- Nearly 3x the number of shift requests by employees

"API Healthcare allowed us to reach our staffing and scheduling goals much quicker than expected. The visibility into our workforce and the ability to collect data more effectively allowed us to substantially increase productivity and improve our bottom line."

– Nancy Barton, Director of Staffing, Northeast Georgia Health System

Designed to deliver complete insight into all open shifts across the entire group, the technology dramatically improves scheduling efficiencies and allows managers to staff shifts with the right people. ShiftSelect has allowed NGPG to maintain a consistent open-shift fill-rate of 82%, a significant accomplishment for an organization of their size.

"API Healthcare's technology allows us to leverage information from employee profiles, identifying which staff meets a particular shift's qualifications," said NGPG Director Bobby Norris. "Because our organization is so broad, having access to this information has helped us ensure we are filling open shifts with the right employees in the most efficient way possible."

With the ability to broadcast open shifts, the team at NGPG also implemented ShiftRewards, an incentive program that rewards employees for meeting scheduling thresholds. Designed to improve employee satisfaction and provide employees greater control over their schedules, ShiftRewards provides points-based incentives to employees for requesting and/or being awarded certain shifts. Points can be redeemed for a variety of items including iPads, TVs, grills or other household items.

## Looking Ahead

In addition to 62 NGPG departments, other groups at NGHS locations across the country leveraging ShiftSelect and ShiftRewards technology include behavioral health, ER, sitter pools, cardiac rehab, outpatient cardiology, surgical services, and imaging. As NGHS prepares to open a second hospital in 2015, there are plans to expand the technology to accommodate the growing workforce and growing patient demand for care services.

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**– Bobby Norris, Director, Northeast Georgia Physicians Group**

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Northeast Georgia Physicians Group has been rewarded for participation in this case study and is a member of the API Star client reference program that rewards clients for sharing their outcomes, expertise and opinions.



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