

# ‘Excellent,’ efficient care

Boosting productivity and performance with always-current, mobile-enabled technology.

Regional orthopedic spine center | 4 locations in Colorado and New Mexico  
900 clinical encounters a month | 8 clinicians

Before switching to athenahealth, Spine Colorado’s practice management and electronic medical record technology couldn’t keep up with clinicians who serve a regional population at four locations. “Our old software made mobile patient care very challenging,” said Christopher R. Scott, MS, CMPE, CEO of Spine Colorado. “With athenahealth, I can hand someone a laptop or an iPad, and they’re a fully functional clinician wherever they happen to be.”

Since implementing athenaOne, athenahealth’s cloud-based suite of electronic clinical record, revenue cycle management, and patient engagement services, the practice has significantly improved efficiency. Clinicians can easily check one another’s notes no matter who is treating a patient. Since the EHR is integrated with prescription drug monitoring programs, medication management is much simpler. Scott says that user-friendly features like these have raised work RVUs to the upper quartile of Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) averages.

Recently, Spine Colorado began using athenaOne® Authorization Management to streamline their authorization process. Now, instead of relying on staff to spend time manually tracking down payer information, the service automatically begins processing precertifications as soon as a clinician enters a procedure, surgery or imaging order into athenaClinicals. A rules engine automatically checks the order against payer requirements to determine if an authorization is required. If it is, athenahealth’s authorization team communicates directly with payers to submit documentation, follow up on status and manage the authorization to completion. The service continually adjusts to changing payer regulations.

Spine Colorado is confident knowing that athenahealth’s team is taking care of authorizations efficiently and accurately. What’s more, the service has saved the practice the equivalent of one full-time employee. “We’ve gotten 40 hours a week back,” said Scott. “We repurposed those hours to higher-value issues, like improving the patient experience.” He adds that the Authorization Tracker tool provides complete visibility into the authorization process, which aligns with the practice’s commitment to transparency.

## Successfully adapting to changes with athenahealth’s always-current platform

athenahealth’s network continually updates to reflect changing payer rules including new physician fee schedules from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Evolving CMS rules have a particular impact on Spine Colorado since about half of their patients are Medicare beneficiaries. The practice appreciates how athenahealth’s platform automatically incorporates changes to reimbursement guidelines and quality reporting without extra staff effort.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, the practice relied on athenaCommunicator for rapid outreach to segments of its patient panel. Combined with athenaTelehealth, which is integrated with athenaOne, they were able to promptly transition many appointments into virtual care. “athenahealth’s cohesive solutions keep staff and clinicians’ workflow efficient, even during major events,” said Scott. “athenahealth’s tools are easy for patients to use, too. They help us remove technological barriers, stay current with changes and focus on providing excellent care.”

## Challenges

Difficult to access patient records outside of brick-and-mortar locations

Cumbersome documentation process

Too much staff time spent on authorization process

Lack of insight into progress of authorizations

## Solutions

athenaOne® Authorization Management

## Results

Integrated mobile-ready solution for better collaboration, productivity

Seamless clinical documentation

Improved physician work RVUs

Repurposed equivalent of one full-time professional to higher-value work

99.5% authorization success rate

100% visibility into authorization process

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— Christopher R. Scott, MS, CMPE, CEO of Spine Colorado, PC

Ready to schedule a meeting? Call 800-981-5084 or visit [athenahealth.com](https://athenahealth.com) to learn more.