

# Empowering Hawaii's Critical Access Hospitals with Epic Community Connect

## CLIENT INSIGHTS

**Client Name:** Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC), West Hawaii Region

**Type:** Critical Access Hospitals

## CHALLENGE:

**Rural hospitals** like Kona Community Hospital and Kohala Hospital **face unique challenges when implementing complex electronic health record (EHR) systems** such as Epic. Unlike large health systems, these facilities often lack the system-specific experience needed to adapt workflows, optimize revenue cycle processes, and maximize advanced reporting capabilities during an EHR transition.

When **Epic Community Connect** is **deployed from a large host organization**, the default build and workflows are designed for dedicated teams for each function and **configured for environments with extensive specialized staffing**, whereas **smaller hospitals depend on versatile staff who juggle many responsibilities**.

**This mismatch can lead to operational inefficiencies, unresolved support tickets, and frustration among staff.** Without expert guidance, critical access hospitals **risk underutilizing Epic's capabilities, which can impact patient care, financial performance, and staff satisfaction.**



## SOLUTION

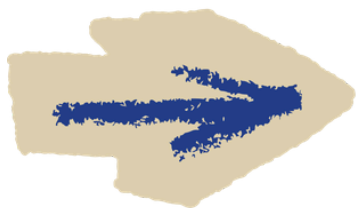
Health Systems Informatics (HSi) partnered with HHSC's West Hawaii Region (WHR) to bridge these gaps. Leveraging deep experience with Epic systems and prior success with their host, HSi provided a comprehensive consulting engagement that included:

- **Post-Live Support:** Immediate assistance for providers and clinical documentation to stabilize operations after Go-Live.
- **Revenue Cycle Optimization:** Led by an HSi Revenue Cycle consultant, HSi partnered with WHR to quickly identify opportunities for optimization and practical solutions that would fit within their host's environment. With familiarity with the host build, HSi's experience enabled the team to pinpoint areas where improvements would have the greatest impact, helping WHR navigate challenges and accelerate progress while respecting the strengths and context of both organizations.
- **Clinical Informatics Mentorship:** HSi helped WHR identify process and workflow gaps and reinforced training and learning opportunities for informatics staff, supporting continuous improvement and building internal expertise. Working together, HSi shared informatics role job descriptions, highlighted relevant certification opportunities, and provided industry insights on establishing and sustaining effective Super User programs after Go-Live.
- **Reporting Capability Development:** HSi delivered critical reports and mentored WHR's new reporting team to build in-house expertise using Epic Reporting Workbench and established Crystal Reports.



## KEY CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

- **Host Build vs. Local Reality:** Large-host workflows (e.g., pharmacy purchasing practices, billing processes and other departmental difference) didn't align with small facility and critical access hospital staffing models. Drawing on HSi's expertise and prior experience with similar challenges, HSi was able to proactively facilitate the identification of necessary exceptions and support WHR in implementing effective redesigns.
- **Communication Barriers:** Facilitating open and collaborative conversations, HSi helped both WHR and the host teams surface priorities, clarify requests, and accelerate issue resolution. By guiding discussions and aligning perspectives, HSi supported effective problem-solving and strengthened partnership across organizations.
- **Data & Reporting Gaps:** Post-implementation reporting remained a pain point. HSi's mentorship ensured WHR could meet regulatory and operational reporting needs independently.



## IMPACT:

By bringing in Epic experts from outside, WHR supplemented their internal knowledge and made inroads to making Epic Community Connect work for their unique environment. HSi's approach helped WHR:

- Optimize revenue cycle workflows, improving cash flow and reducing billing errors.
- Enhance clinical documentation and charge capture, particularly in high-acuity areas like the Emergency Department.
- Identify a roadmap to grow sustainable internal capabilities for informatics and reporting, reducing reliance on external vendors.
- Continue to advocate for WHR's needs within the partnership through identification of ways to enhance collaboration and communication.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Rural acute and critical access hospitals serve as lifelines for rural communities, but their limited resources make complex EHR deployments daunting.

HSi's expertise ensures these hospitals don't just "go Live" on Epic - they thrive.

By tailoring workflows, mentoring staff, and bridging communication gaps, HSi partners with small hospitals to identify opportunities and provide guidance, supporting them as they take ownership of changes to fully leverage Epic Community Connect and improve patient care and operational efficiency.



## NEXT STEPS

HSi continues to support WHR through ongoing optimization projects, reporting initiatives, and mentorship, ensuring long-term success with Epic and sustainable growth for Hawaii's healthcare system.