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Pilot Profile

Petaluma Health Center provides primary care, dental care and mental health services to the Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Cotati and Penngrove in Sonoma County, and Western Marin County. PHC's 35,478 patients had a total of 90,920 encounters in 2020.

Issue

Visit documentation has many challenges. Providers are responsible for a significant portion of visit documentation, and they report frequent frustration and dissatisfaction with the process. Some have physical limitations and require assistance. In-person scribe solutions are expensive. Salary, training and onboarding costs, and high turnover rates, make in-person scribe options cost-prohibitive

Tool

eCW Mobile Scribe

Metrics

- Provider self-reported efficiency & satisfaction
- Ease of use
- Impact on patient/provider encounter

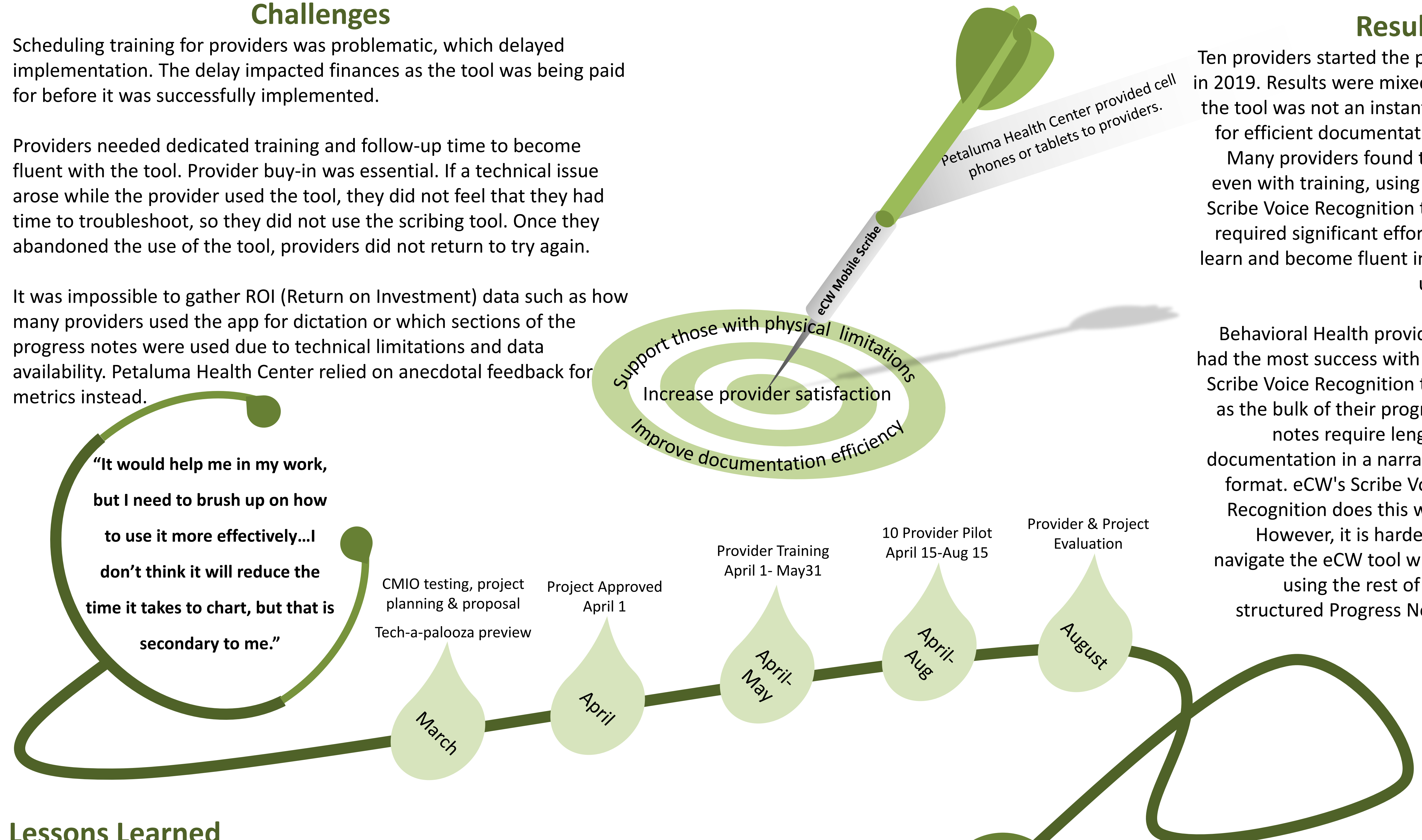
Challenges

Scheduling training for providers was problematic, which delayed implementation. The delay impacted finances as the tool was being paid for before it was successfully implemented.

Providers needed dedicated training and follow-up time to become fluent with the tool. Provider buy-in was essential. If a technical issue arose while the provider used the tool, they did not feel that they had time to troubleshoot, so they did not use the scribing tool. Once they abandoned the use of the tool, providers did not return to try again.

It was impossible to gather ROI (Return on Investment) data such as how many providers used the app for dictation or which sections of the progress notes were used due to technical limitations and data availability. Petaluma Health Center relied on anecdotal feedback for metrics instead.

"It would help me in my work, but I need to brush up on how to use it more effectively...I don't think it will reduce the time it takes to chart, but that is secondary to me."



Results

Ten providers started the pilot in 2019. Results were mixed as the tool was not an instant fix for efficient documentation. Many providers found that even with training, using the Scribe Voice Recognition tool required significant effort to learn and become fluent in its use.

Behavioral Health providers had the most success with the Scribe Voice Recognition tool as the bulk of their progress notes require lengthy documentation in a narrative format. eCW's Scribe Voice Recognition does this well. However, it is harder to navigate the eCW tool when using the rest of the structured Progress Note.

Lessons Learned

- Whether you use a scribe app or are working within the text/templates of your EHR, it takes time and practice to gain efficiency and use the systems fluently.
- Scribe apps can be very helpful for providers who are unable to type due to physical limitations.
- Due to the narrative nature of their visits, scribe applications may be well suited to behavioral health providers.

Outcome

Ultimately it was determined that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution in this area. Different people need different solutions. A systematic way to help identify those who would benefit from scribe apps, as well as clear expectations of tool mastery is required.