

New challenges and opportunities



JOSH WELCH

VP Revenue Cycle

*Former position:
Executive Director of Revenue Cycle,
John Muir Health*

When John Muir Health contracted with Optum to manage its nonclinical services — including information technology, revenue cycle, and purchasing and analytics — some changes were inevitable. As part of a ten-year partnership, about 530 employees transitioned to Optum. Here is one executive's experience with that process.

BEFORE THE PARTNERSHIP

Prior to the transition, I was the executive director of revenue cycle, overseeing all the traditional components of revenue cycle. That included middle and backend revenue cycles for the general health enterprise, including both the acute care services and ambulatory operations.

I had been “under the tent” so to speak at the infancy of the discussions with Optum — we had been contemplating a potential smartsourcing deal and had some discussions with a few different companies. In talking with Optum, we began to learn more about the company given the scale — Optum Ventures, Optum Bank, Optum Rx. As part of that exploration, I knew that we would be making some changes.

TRANSITION

The time leading up to the deal being inked was so much more interactive and collaborative than I had anticipated — which gave me hope that Optum knew what they were doing. That was very different from the experience that we had had previously in our discussions with other companies. That was good just for my own personal comfort level.

It was very good to see how Optum really listened and made the process work for John Muir Health in terms of the transition. There was a tremendously robust communication plan and lots of information for employees to check out. We also became accustomed to all the self-service resources within Optum — everything from employee relations to their HR touch points. From a people perspective, that was incredible.



“From a people perspective, Optum had experience in taking on and working with large organizations, including the Advisory Board. So, we knew Optum could take on John Muir Health's large population of talented folks in a very deliberate, prescriptive and customized way.”



WHY I VALUE WORKING FOR OPTUM

- Involvement with ECC (Employee Community Council)
- Access to resources and new technologies
- Members of my team that can participate in emerging leader programs

AFTER THE TRANSITION

In terms of my daily life, I still manage the revenue cycle and in the way that I always have. I still have the same direct reporting structure within my team. Another thing that hasn't changed is my continued partnership with Chris Pass (John Muir Health CFO). My former boss still is my counterpart — and I appreciate that.

As far as transitioning to Optum, we're not viewed as a vendor, and it certainly doesn't feel like a vendor relationship. It still feels like a partnership. I think my teams would attest to that — they still feel like they're part of John Muir Health, which is important.

We did see more resources at our disposal, in terms of the Optum transformation. Some of the resources that were brought to bear helped with the net new things or things that needed replacing. There were a lot of new things that we were able to do — like the replacing of the computer assisted coding tool — that would have been a daunting task without those additional resources.

From a personal perspective, I'm now involved with the ECC (Employee Community Council), which is a passion of mine. ECC is a structured group of Optum employee-volunteers who execute planned activities and events that align with our Health and Wellness business objectives and Social Responsibility goals. I like that the ECC approach here is more about the community, the health of the community and giving back to the community.

There really is a deep culture within Optum as well. It's really aligned and consistent with that of John Muir Health — probably more than any other health system out there.

Obviously, the opportunities are much greater at Optum than just working in a smaller organization where you traditionally have to wait for somebody to vacate a position in order to have any sort of upward career trajectory. Within Optum, you see a lot of opportunities available. Whether they're new opportunities or just opportunities because there's so much movement, I think it's exciting for our teams.



"My team, as well as my leadership team, is still 100% intact. I think that's a testament to the process, our transition and the opportunities that they all see for themselves within Optum."

The transition journey to Optum

Contract signed

Accessed
welcome website

Attended orientation
and benefit sessions

Participated in
culture sessions

Learned about partnership
through working on the
transition team

Received Optum
offer letter

Completed onboarding
activities and training