

## CRESCENT COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER SEES SIGNIFICANT EFFICIENCIES IN IMPLEMENTING AND EXPANDING ITS ISOLVED DEPLOYMENT

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### What You Need to Know

Part-and-parcel of any HR function is, usually, a daunting volume of pressing administration and attendant risk mitigation necessary to managing the employment of people. If an HR department ever manages to lessen these activities' tendency to monopolize practitioners' day-to-day workload, the department's leaders can begin to turn their focus to strategic concerns—namely, helping to ensure positive employee sentiment, the key ingredient driving improvements in the retention of employees, greater employee engagement and productivity, and more. Furthermore, smaller businesses stand much to gain from moving into modern software for human capital management—away from the low-tech or no-tech circumstances in which most of them begin their journey in HR ([3Sixty Insights 3SICS21122 - Central Minnesotan Kensington Bank Reports Success in Implementing and Expanding isolved via Partnership with AssetHR, December 2021](#)).

### About Crescent Community Health Center

Crescent Community Health Center (CCHC) is, as the name implies, a health center. Founded in October 2006, CCHC serves 27 counties surrounding the organization's headquarters in Dubuque, Iowa. "Our business model is that of Federally Qualified Health Center," says Mary Kay Kirgis, human resources generalist at CCHC. As an FQHC, CCHC supplements its federal grant funding with significant sources of individual charitable donations and 340B pharmacy revenues. "We provide medical, dental, brain health and quick-care services to anyone in the community regardless of their ability to pay. Self-pay patients are seen on a sliding fee scale. It's based on patients' income relative to the Federal Poverty Level and family size, which determines how much they pay."

As a generalist, Kirgis does "a little bit of everything. I do recruiting. I do benefits administration. I do all the general HR work we need," which can also include employee manuals, policy preparation, credentialing, licensing, and privileging of all CCHC's providers and patient-facing staff.

To this last point, the work is continually increasing. CCHC is growing due to increasing demand for services, as the number of patients at or below the federal poverty line is also growing in the organization's service area. Soon after she became a member of staff, the company surpassed 100 in personnel. In late October 2021, when 3Sixty Insights conducted the research for this report, CCHC had 112 employees

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### AT A GLANCE

#### Solution

isolved

#### Research Participant

Crescent Community Health Center (CCHC)

#### The Situation

- Lack of cohesive, modern software in place for HCM
- Heavy administrative load for HR as a result
- Difficulties in scaling to the organization's fast growth
- Unnecessary compliance-related labor expenditure

#### Success Highlights

- Offloaded responsibility for COBRA compliance
- Elsewhere, further mitigated compliance risk
- Accommodating CCHC growth, modernized recruiting, onboarding
- Drastically reduced HR's administrative burden
- Making room for future, strategic HR initiatives

and, according to Kirgis, was expecting to reach 118 by the end of the following month. Fueled by demand for CCHC's affordable model, "our rapid growth is requiring us to get our administrative legs under us," she says. CCHC reports an experience that underscores isolved deployments' ability to help small businesses bring order to the wide breadth of administrative and employee tasks processed in HR.

**Crescent Community Health Center reports an experience that underscores isolved deployments' ability to help small businesses bring order to the wide breadth of administrative and employee tasks processed in HR.**

## The Situation—and Success with isolved

Most of CCHC's processes were highly manual previously. There was no human resource information system (HRIS), for example, and little in place for

HCM functionality aside from an FQHC-based learning management system (LMS) (whose accessible capabilities were thin) and, for recruiting, Indeed, the state primary care association, and one-off recruiters. Kirgis joined the organization a year later, in June 2020. It was a year earlier, June 2019, when CCHC deployed isolved, first with timekeeping. Kirgis does not have insight into the before-and-after state of that activity in particular. Since her joining the organization, however, she has participated heavily in decision-making to introduce several additional modules of isolved. Now, across benefits administration, associated compliance, as well as an array of additional domains of HCM, such as learning, applicant tracking, onboarding, and more, CCHC's deployment paints a compelling picture of how modern software for HCM can help lift HR at a small, growing business out of heavy administrative processes and into a position where leadership can begin to plot more strategic activity. Kirgis points to newfound time savings and related risk mitigation directly attributable to the deployment of isolved.

### Benefits Administration

CCHC deployed isolved for benefits administration at the outset of March 2020. "I don't have to push paper anymore," says Kirgis. Before isolved, benefits administration at CCHC was entirely paper-based. Now, employees simply go into the system and make their elections. Kirgis reviews and approves them. "I can pull a report and then filter that report as I need to send over to our vendors." She looks forward to incorporating isolved's ability to automatically feed the information to benefits vendors. As of now, the time she spends doing this piece manually does not justify deploying the additional functionality. However, "in the future, if we continue to grow and get to 300 people, that's when this capability would provide me the time savings that makes sense."

Related to compliance with the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Kirgis points to functionality around the 1095 form, including the ability to show related information in employees' pay stubs, as an especially helpful net-positive from the deployment of isolved. "It makes it easier to provide those 1095 forms and show we have an ACA-

## About isolved

Founded in 1986, isolved provides a full suite of HCM functionality designed for the upper SMB market and the lower midmarket. Through broad and deep capabilities in talent management, core HR and payroll, workforce management, and engagement management, isolved People Cloud helps clients with the following HCM outcomes:

- Workforce Effectiveness
- Retention & Development
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Employee Engagement
- Employee Wellbeing
- Employment Value Proposition
- HR & Employee Efficiency
- Work-Life Balance
- Journey & Career Support

qualified plan, that these people were on the benefit from this date to this date, for example. If they weren't on the plan the whole year, why weren't they on it? It helps us show the answers to these questions for compliance. When I go through it, I don't have to correct as much as when it was just shown as a deduction." Kirgis says she looks forward to seeing how much time this functionality saves her once she's made full use of it, at the end of January 2022.

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## COBRA Compliance

"The catapult for us to deploy the election portion of isolved's COBRA solutions was the fact that a new COVID-related rule came into effect in March 2021," Kirgis says. In requiring

specific eligibility letters to go out to people that were eligible at specific times, part of the new rule affected COBRA. "Whatever the case may be, furlough or termination, we had to send out a specific notification." The new rule specifically necessitated that CCHC send out COBRA notification within 15 days of the triggering event, the given person's eligibility date. The consequence for missing a 15-day window is a \$110 fine per person, per day a notification is late, in addition to other fines and penalties that may be awarded.

"That's not a long time and very easy to miss," she says. "And you always worry about making sure things go out on time." In assessing the situation, Kirgis believed the time she'd need to ensure compliance with the new rule and the rest of COBRA regulations every time COBRA came into play would weigh significantly on her day-to-day workload. This and associated financial risks of noncompliance convinced her to hand CCHC's compliance with COBRA to isolved—with positive outcomes. "I actually don't really think about COBRA now," she says. "I look at the emails from our COBRA services once a week just so see that it went out, and that's it." The move resulted in direct time savings for Kirgis every month.

## Learning

In the fall 2021, CCHC signed off to deploy isolved's LMS. This replaced an FQHC-focused platform CCHC had been using for some time. The previous system "was strictly compliance-based," says Kirgis, and didn't "have anything that would help us cultivate leadership in our staff or with employee development," such as training in blood-borne pathogens, safety awareness, and more—all areas of capabilities and knowledge that CCHC wanted and needed to cultivate from within. And the organization needed an LMS that would help groom existing employees for positions of leadership at a pace matching the need to fill these roles at the speed of CCHC's growth.

"We looked at three or four different options, and isolved by far had the mix that we were looking for," to combine compliance, leadership, and employee development at a cost significantly more manageable than the other solutions evaluated. It remains too early to assess any



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**Mary Kay Kirgis**

HR Generalist  
Crescent Community Health  
Center

# CASE STUDY

cost-related benefits the isolated LMS has yielded for CCHC, but Kirgis and her team are pleased with the decision and expect to get what they need. “We’re going to partner with our local community college and provide leadership training in that way, as well,” she says.

## Recruiting, Applicant Tracking

As for recruiting at CCHC prior to isolated, “shockingly, it wasn’t as paper based as you might think,” Kirgis says, but “actual applications that we received were paper.” Specifically, CCHC was relying heavily on Indeed. Between Indeed and local papers, the main issue was that the scenario limited how many people CCHC could reach with its recruiting efforts. “We weren’t touching nearly as many people as we were hoping.” This was especially the case in the organization’s efforts to source providers, executive staff, and others with the leadership qualities or highly specialized capabilities CCHC needed. Beyond this, because applications were paper-based, Kirgis had no way to track who had applied, when they had done so, or how. The pace of CCHC’s growth began to exacerbate the effects of these limitations on the organization’s ability to hire the right people and fast enough. “It was getting to be a pretty big, almost a full-time job,” says Kirgis.

That it was nearly like a full-time job for her is not as much of an exaggeration as it might sound, she insists, and the situation created a sense of urgency to find something better. Following a brief exploration of alternatives, the team at CCHC ultimately decided to deploy the isolated applicant tracking system (ATS). “We were already with isolated,” Kirgis says, “and it made sense to continue down that track.”

**Prior to CCHC’s deployment of isolated’s talent acquisition-related functionality, the pace of growth at the organization was beginning to exacerbate the effects of CCHC’s previously low-tech ecosystem for hiring and onboarding new employees.**

The inefficiencies dogging Kirgis with the previous scenario presented immense opportunities. With any position to fill, an application would come in. Kirgis would download and save the application. Then, she’d email it to a hiring manager, who would let her know how to handle that application—whether they wanted a phone screen, whether they wanted Kirgis to do the phone screen, or whether they wanted an in-person interview right away. Kirgis would schedule all that. This scenario played out for every incoming application. With the isolated ATS, by contrast, “I see the applicant and all I have to do is assign it to the hiring manager. They can review it, then email me back and say, ‘I want an in-person interview,’ or, ‘I want you to fill in the screen.’” Kirgis can easily keep track of and report on how many people have applied to CCHC, how many applicants the organization has interviewed, and additional, related activities “to see where we’re sitting. And the unbelievably awesome thing is, all I have to do is post one job posting. And the applicant tracking system sends it out to 16 different job boards”—not just Indeed. and, importantly, applications enter the CCHC ecosystem electronically.

## In the New Normal, Getting Talent Acquisition Right

In August 2021, more than [4.25 million](#) Americans left their jobs. In September, another [4.43 million](#) did so. Fast-forward to November, and the number was a record-breaking [4.5 million](#). Organizations industrywide face unprecedented challenges in sourcing and hiring well-matched talent for their needs amidst a tight job market. The so-named Great Resignation has produced a dearth of talent that means every potential new hire is precious and incredibly difficult to identify and woo. The employee experience is more important than ever and now begins before someone even becomes an employee. Without an ATS, or with a bad one, organizations risk losing track of top candidates or causing them to abandon the process before a hiring manager gets a chance to speak with them. In the absence of a modern solution to handle onboarding, new hires are left with a subpar first impression and are apt to leave; all the competition is hiring too, after all. To avoid these pitfalls and staff their growth, organizations are wise to deploy capable software for their talent acquisition ([3Sixty Insights BWSRN2211 - Choose Your Own Adventure: Returning to the Workplace, Protecting the Employee Experience, January 2022](#)).

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Notably, there is room with the isolated ATS to eliminate inefficiencies further. In the meantime, Kirgis' aim is to manage the learning curve for CCHC. "We aren't up to the full abilities of that system by any means. Right now, I'm getting our hiring managers on it so they can learn the environment. The next step is to give them more access, more ability to hire and become more efficient within the system." The idea, according to Kirgis, is not to create more work than necessary for herself, all at once, by granting them full access and capabilities right away.

## Onboarding

The driving need was to get away from an entirely paper-based onboarding workflow. "Before, we didn't really do significant onboarding in advance of an employee's start date, if you want to define onboarding as something you do ahead of a new hire's first day. All that work was done the day they started. We would have a stack of paper that they'd have to sign." This included a confidentiality agreement, a media release, the drug policy. "And we'd have all this other stuff, electronic consent, things like that. That was all paper. And we thought, 'This should not be paper.'" So Kirgis and her isolated representative spent about two months identifying everything related to onboarding at CCHC and uploading it all into the isolated system "to do true onboarding and integration." Now, when CCHC hires someone, all Kirgis has to do is just click a few icons, and it feeds their data to the onboarding system, isolated functionality that CCHC deployed early last year. "It's a matter of streamlining these processes so they just roll into our HRIS system. So, it's not as much of a management headache anymore."

## Next Steps and a Bright Future with isolated

CCHC has already deployed a broad cross-section of isolated's HCM suite, isolated People Cloud. In addition to onboarding, for example, she and the team later added isolated's background screening system, integrated with the ATS, "which is just two clicks." One of the most significant remaining silos to add is performance management, which is on Kirgis' to-do list. The idea is to begin combining performance management and learning in modern, engaging ways for employees. "After that, we're looking at expense management," she says. Additionally, given isolated's ability to support credential licensing and privileging, she is looking into this, as well.

"One thing I appreciate is how we've actually built isolated for our company," she says. "We didn't try to bite it off all at once. We piecemealed it together to make it fit what we needed, as we went." And all this success in digitizing automatable HCM processes at CCHC has inspired Kirgis. "Our biggest goal right now, I want within two years to get rid of all the paper that we have floating around." It's an achievable goal now within sight.

3Sixty Insights Inc. Navigating the Information Technology Buying Process.

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## Mastering Concrete HCM

All this success in digitizing automatable HCM process at CCHC has inspired Kirgis. "Our biggest goal right now, I want within two years to get rid of all the paper that we have floating around." It's an achievable goal reflecting a larger picture common to small organizations' HR operations. Few, when they start a business, think to solve for HR with any intentionality. Without any system built specifically for it, founders or other members of the original leadership team become responsible for HR—e.g., benefits administration, talent acquisition, the regulatory compliance of onboarding, and all the rest. Only when this time-consuming administrative work becomes unmanageable, however—when it is no longer defensible for these "accidental HR people" to approach HR as an afterthought performed asymmetrically—does the organization relent, and an HR practitioner will join the team. After a spate of running HR in the absence of modern tools for it, this HR person eventually persuades leadership to invest in an HRIS. It is at this point that HR finally gets out from underneath a heavy burden and finds new life in fighting for aspirational goals for the organization ([3Sixty Insights BWSRN2142 – Concrete vs. Abstract HCM: The Power of "And," April 2021](#)). Their success in reaching these higher goals varies and hinges on an array of factors, but the first steps, always, are to minimize the administrative load and mitigate associated risk.