



Josh Welch

Vice President,
Revenue Cycle

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

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From a people perspective, Optum had experience 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.

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 10-year partnership, approximately 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 back-end 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 were 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 scale of the company – Optum Ventures, Optum Financial®, 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 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 human resources touch points. From a people perspective, that was incredible.



Why I value working for Optum

- Involvement with 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 John Muir Health leadership. My former boss still is my counterpart, which I appreciate.

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 have more resources at our disposal, in terms of the Optum transformation. Some of the resources helped with the net new things or things that needed replacing. We were able to do a lot of new things – like replacing our 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 Employee Community Council (ECC), 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 is about the community, the health of the community and giving back to the community.

The Optum culture is 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 working in a smaller organization where you traditionally have to wait for a position to open in order to have any sort of upward career trajectory. Within Optum, you see a lot of available opportunities and I think it's exciting for our teams.

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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.

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