SOMETIMES, YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW THE REAL VALUE OF SOMEONE OR SOMETHING UNTIL IT IS GONE.

Just ask Raleigh Neurology Associates:

The Raleigh, N.C., practice was a beta site for Medfusions Patient Chat, which provides live, online support services for patient portal users. After a couple of months post-beta, RNA discontinued the service, not fully anticipating the potential implications.

When Raleigh Neurology launched its new Pain Center in February 2015, practice leaders knew almost immediately that they had to bring back Patient Chat. “We receive over 2,000 calls a day and the addition of the new Pain Center only increased our calls, so anything we can do to eliminate or minimize some of those calls is of great value and certainly makes us more efficient,” Katie Nyberg, RNA Health Information Systems Specialist, said. It wasn't long before the value of Patient Chat proved itself within the organization.

In the first few months after bringing Patient Chat back as a service, the phone volume has dropped by hundreds of calls each month. “Further, it has increased our portal utilization, which is always important, as we want to know our technology advancements are showing a return on investment,” she said.
Nyberg believes that the value to the patients is equally as great and important. “Our patients appreciate the Patient Chat service, because they have assistance immediately while they are online. They don’t have to pick up the phone and wait on hold to get someone within the practice to try to answer their questions.”

“In fact, with Patient Chat, the patients have the portal experts to assist them while online, so whether they need help with their passwords or something much more technical, they are in the best hands,” Nyberg said.

And the service costs less than $1 per day per provider, easily illustrating its financial value to the practice.

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