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Customer story



Industry

Healthcare & rehabilitation services

Use case

Compliance training, employee onboarding, employee upskilling

Solution

[Absorb LMS](#), [Absorb Create](#)

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Challenge

- Design an automated, end-to-end, scalable system to verify dry-needling credentials.
- Create a system that avoids manual delays in verifying competencies and granting scheduling privileges.
- Ensure financial integrity by linking training levels to billing access.

Solution

- Absorb LMS as a tiered credentialing platform.
- Competency verification tied to scheduling and billing privileges.
- Live credential tracking and full audit trails.
- Automated reminders to support compliance.

Results

- Full program compliance and patient safety.
- Reliable and fast credentialing from automated workflows.
- Revenue protection and growth.

Summary

Rehabilitation services provider ATI Physical Therapy faced a clinical and operational challenge across its vast network of 850 locations. Dry-needling services must be provided and billed by credentialed therapists only. To train therapists and verify their credentials, ATI used Absorb to design a streamlined and automated physical therapy credentialing pipeline that tied scheduling and billing permissions to verified credentials and competencies. The initiative not only achieved 100% training compliance, but it also reduced administrative bottlenecks, protected revenue, and upheld the company's commitment to delivering excellence in patient care and safety.



Thomas Denninger

VP of Clinical Development

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Ultimately, this initiative was much more than a training program for ATI Physical Therapy – it became a powerful tool for recognizing risk, protecting revenue, and elevating clinical standards across our organization. By automating credentialing and linking verified competencies to scheduling and billing access, Absorb LMS helped us achieve 100% compliance, eliminate uncredentialed scheduling, and drive a 7.7% increase in net patient revenue.



ATI Physical Therapy ensures patient safety and revenue growth with streamlined credentialing on Absorb LMS

[ATI Physical Therapy](#) prides itself on patient care and customer service. Since its founding in 1996, the company has dedicated itself to research, communication, and its exceptional team members. The comprehensive treatment approach once offered in a single location in Illinois 25 years ago is now the care standard provided to thousands of patients at 850 locations across the United States.

As a leader in rehabilitation services, ATI Physical Therapy is committed to delivering care and therapy specialties to its patients at the highest possible calibre.

Thomas Denninger, VP of Clinical Development, is proud of the quality of services the company offers, including compliance with and support for employee professional certifications and skills. “Whether care is provided at a clinic, worksite, or athletic field, we strive for quality and excellence.”

A clinical and operational challenge

That commitment to excellence was recently tested by a specific clinical and operational challenge related to dry-needling services. As a therapeutic modality, dry-needling must be performed—and billed—only by credentialed therapists. However, states have variable requirements in training, and the company had not had a consistent way to track and validate dry-needling knowledge, skills, and proof of training. That process was **slow, inconsistent, and not auditable**.

The issue posed a risk to **patient safety and billing compliance** and created service delays. As Denninger explains, “Unqualified therapists could inadvertently perform or bill for services, creating safety risk and undermining operational integrity.”

To reduce exposure to patient and financial risk, ATI Physical Therapy needed a way to make sure only qualified staff could offer the service. To work effectively nationwide, any solution would need to be **automated and scalable**.



Privileging power

The company decided to bridge the gap between the moment a clinician completed dry-needling training and received a certificate for that competency—and link those achievements to scheduling access.

A **structured and automated privileging system** would ensure only fully qualified therapists with demonstrated competencies could perform dry-needling services. “It had to be an easy system to understand. If not, people could get frustrated, abandon the initiative, and wait to see if they got called out down the line,” says Denninger. “A fast and easy process was crucial for adoption.”

The company used Absorb Learning Management Software to design a tiered credentialing program to ensure only qualified therapists could perform and bill for specific services.

The team used **Absorb’s Curriculum Builder** to organize the NeedleCert PrivilegePath program along two separate curriculum paths. “The Base tier focused on certificate uploads,” Denninger explains, “while the Advanced tier required a blend of quizzes and real-world proof via video submissions.”

In addition to the structured learning paths, the program leveraged Absorb’s **automated enrollment rules** to ensure the process advanced sequentially. Enrollment into the Advanced tier was gated, with entry reserved to therapists who’d already completed the Base tier and received the Base tier badge. Absorb Create enabled the development of the custom quizzes and SCORM and API-compliant assessments for validating therapist knowledge.



Linking competencies to access – in real time

The program used Absorb's API-integrated LMS to **connect digital badging in real-time** with clinical readiness. When therapists met the necessary requirements, Base and Advanced level badges were triggered automatically, with no human intervention needed. ATI developers used **HCM connectors and webhooks** to link badge status directly to the scheduling system. The moment a therapist earned an active Advanced badge, they had permission to schedule dry-needling sessions.

"These visual credentials weren't just digital trophies," says Denninger, "they carried real power. When therapists earned an Advanced badge, it wasn't just recognition. It was their "key" to the scheduling ecosystem."

Seamless auditing

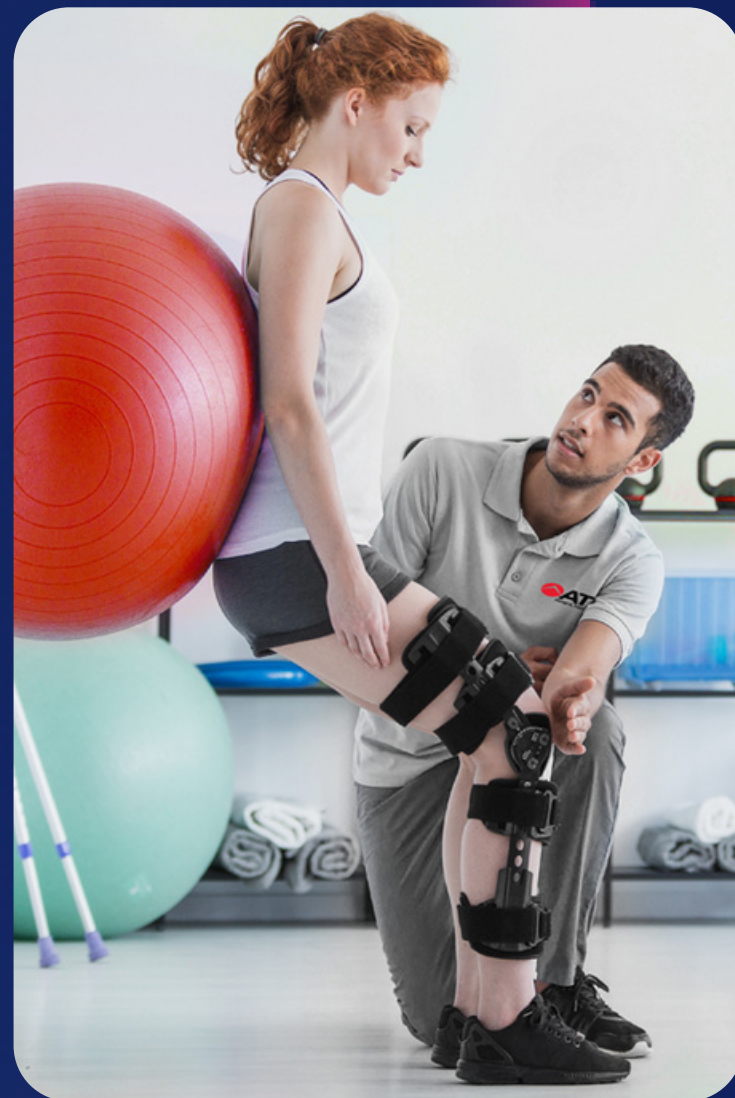
The company created a seamless loop that tied competency to patient care privileges and billing authorization—an end-to-end system that was fully auditable.

Real-time dashboards provided comprehensive audit trails. Training records, certificate uploads, badge awards, competency dates, and scheduling permissions were all recorded and timestamped. That mass of program data was also **easily exportable for compliance reporting**.

Automation and syncing between the API and the LMS eliminated manual work and administrative bottlenecks, streamlining workflows. The admin team had **instant visibility** into who was credentialed, whose credentials needed renewing, and who had scheduling access. “No more spreadsheets. No more manual checks,” adds Denninger.

With therapist profiles **synchronized with HR in real time**, administrators could focus on exceptions, not data-entry. Roles updated automatically and credentials flowed through the pipeline with instant updating. Instead of spending time with data entry or credential validation, the team was **better able to audit and proactively coach** on care delivery.

The aim of the program was patient focused. Everything was designed to be **standardized and safety-first to support patient care**. There was no chance of patient harm when only credentialed providers could provide the dry-needling service. “They’re the only ones authorized to bill for it.” says Denninger. “This safeguards ATI’s commitment to safety and financial integrity.”



100% clinical accountability

As Denninger relates the development story behind ATI's credentialing pipeline, he's proud of the alignment of strategy and platform. "The solution moves beyond functionality. It reveals a strategy centered on **automation, integration, and clinical accountability**, powered by Absorb LMS."

That fine integration of parts worked exactly as intended, and the results came dramatically quickly "Within weeks of launching our API-badge integration," says Denninger, "our scheduling logs revealed a striking outcome. **One hundred percent elimination** of uncredentialed scheduling." Every dry-needling session scheduled was matched to a therapist that held an active Advanced badge.

The NeedleCert PrivilegePath program not only achieved **100% credentialing compliance**, but **automation, API integration, and digital workflows sped up the turnaround between competency verification and scheduling access**. Before, credentialing was abstract or absent. After, an inconsistent process was transformed to become incredibly **consistent and instant**.

Moving from a disorganized system to a permissions-based system involved some initial change management, as qualified therapists needed to find their training certificates. However, because the initiative was founded in patient and provider protection and the process was smooth, there was fast adoption and minimal pushback.

After the program was launched, ATI enjoyed **six consecutive months with zero adverse events** reported. “This was a major improvement from the previous average of 2–3 events per month,” says Denninger. The dry-needling certification program was central to that six-month streak.

100%
credentialing compliance

7.7%
increase in net patient
revenue

On the business side, ATI saw a **7.7% increase in net patient revenue** in Q3 2024 in part to launching a cash-based service line enabled by this pathway. This boost to ATI's bottom line was a clear indicator of the program's financial value. Tying verified clinical competency to billing access **protected revenue by enabling revenue growth and reducing financial risks.**

Tightening scheduling privileges translated to **more accurate billing, fewer scheduling denials, and better financial results.**



Designed for **all-around excellence**

ATI's experience demonstrates how a single program designed to tackle one clinical and operational challenge can have major impact across an organization with hundreds of locations. The company built a **scalable, secure credentialing pipeline** that is **fully automated and delivers audit-ready compliance**. It supports and recognizes therapists' professional development and aligns with ATI's goal of providing all-around excellence—especially in patient care.

Denninger emphasizes how important it was to start with the challenge in designing the solution, rather than the technology.

“By focusing from the start on the risk of unverified clinicians performing dry needling, we built a system that not only ensured education, but also actively protected patients and safeguarded revenue.” Creating a tiered structure let ATI reflect the real-world progression of therapist training. By combining certificate uploads, knowledge assessments, and video demonstrations, ATI ensured comprehensive competency validation—but without manual intervention.

The key to the initiative's success was in **tying learning outcomes directly to clinical access** to support the company's patient service, audit needs, and financial goals. “We moved beyond education into full compliance and operational control.”

Another success factor was starting small. Piloting the initiative with a small group established a **strong foundation and enabled clear communication from the outset before scaling up**. The in-built support system helped **drive high completion and adoption rates** when the LMS for clinical training was launched.

Given the program's success, ATI is now planning to use the base system to validate other restricted treatment modalities and treatments for specialty populations, such as pediatrics, pelvic health, and concussions.

“Ultimately, this initiative was much more than a training program for ATI Physical Therapy,” says Denninger. “It became a **powerful tool for reducing risk, protecting revenue, and elevating clinical standards** across our organization.”

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