ImageSilo® streamlines patient records system for University of Illinois Medical Center at Chicago

The University of Illinois Medical Center at Chicago is the eleventh largest hospital in the Chicago area. Producing annual revenues of approximately $400 million, the Medical Center handles tens of thousands of documents monthly in their Patient Accounts department.

The implementation of PaperFlow, to convert paper documents to scanned images, and ImageSilo, to allow instant retrieval of documents from any location, has allowed the Medical Center to improve worker productivity 100-fold while maintaining compliance with HIPAA regulations and increasing employee morale.

Key Benefits

- Improved worker productivity 100-fold
- 100% HIPAA-compliant solution
- Reduced document retrieval times by at least 40% (from 5 days to minutes)
- Installed in less than one week
- Trained users in seconds

The Situation

The University of Illinois Medical Center at Chicago is one of the nation's premier teaching hospitals. They strive to provide a higher level of care and individual attention to patients and families. The Medical Center is consistently recognized for innovation utilizing the latest advancements in patient care, research and teaching.

When John Herndon took over the IT needs of the Patient Accounts department, his immediate concern was the "mounds and mounds" of paper. The department processes the financial billing and insurance needs for the Center's patients. This includes patient financial records and claims, doctor's referrals, Explanation of Benefits (EOB) statements from insurance companies, Medicare or public aid vouchers, and other documents and information related to patient claims.

This translates to literally "reams of paper per month." The Center was saving medical records for seven years and financial statements for ten in compliance with regulations, and they were running out of room. They had a significant storage problem, and it was getting worse. Every year they estimated that document retention of EOBs alone, grew by roughly 5600 square feet.

To combat the problem, some efforts had been made to convert the information to microfiche. Unfortunately this created a new dilemma as employees were then searching two separate, non-compatible systems for information on a single request. Herndon commented, "We were sorting through hundreds of thousands of documents when working with EOBs to process insurance claims."

His goal was to make information more accessible through a simple system that eliminated time wasted in searching for records. He was also concerned that the solution be deployed quickly with a minimum of interruptions to the Department's workload.

The Solution

In October 2004, Datamation Imaging Services, a Digitech Systems reseller, began scanning the Center's records. They implemented a two part solution: PaperFlow to convert paper documents to scanned images and ImageSilo to provide unlimited

retrieval of information. "We got the system in and deployed in under a week!" said Jim Collins, President of Datamation.

The Medical Center now has more than 28Gb of information on ImageSilo, the equivalent of more than 1 million documents. In a single month, more than 35,000 documents are viewed on ImageSilo by approximately 150 Medical Center personnel.

The key consideration in choosing ImageSilo over other vendors: "No one could match their fast deployment and lower cost." says Herndon. He also indicated that the system's unlimited scalability eased the minds of IT personnel who were concerned about the fast-growing storage consumed by document retention policies.

"ImageSilo is immediately deployable, and I was able to solve my client's need without any formal training and no additional hardware," Collins commented.

Recognized benefits

The Medical Center has seen significant benefits from the implementation of the new ImageSilo system. "We're talking about an improvement from days to seconds here," said John Herndon. Under the old system, the staff would put in a request if they needed information or a voucher, go down several floors, and find the actual piece of paper or locate it on microfiche. In some cases, it took as many as five days before the information was located. Now, staff instantly accesses the needed information right from their desktop PC.

The Medical Center has also made some significant changes in how they do business. They now track how many requests for information are being processed, who accomplished each request, and how long they took to complete. In addition, paper documents are now kept for thirty days, not seven years, and are discarded after an image quality review.

The ImageSilo system also offered the Medical Center a comprehensive reporting and auditing structure, which supports the Center's HIPAA initiatives. Herndon said, "All kinds of things are available to me. The reporting structure is excellent. I like the audit trail—especially in healthcare—that's extremely important. The ability to follow the document allows us to maintain control."

The ImageSilo system is flexible. Since they can increase storage requirements without the expense of additional servers, they are now expanding the system to also store common forms needed to accomplish other jobs.

Even employee morale has improved. Before implementation, employees knew that documents could take a long time to find and they felt the pressure. Now they can access information immediately and quickly fulfill their customer's needs.

About Datamation

Since its founding in 1995, Datamation Imaging Services has provided document management consulting and imaging services for numerous clients in the Chicago area. Datamation has helped hundreds of businesses implement cost-effective, time-efficient document imaging solution. They offer an array of imaging options including document scanning, data entry, OCR, forms processing, workflow and online document management software, and backlog conversions of existing files. They are also a leading reseller of Kodak scanners. Datamation has been a Digitech Systems and ImageSilo reseller since 2000. Datamation is a 2006 Circle of Excellence reseller.

To learn more about Datamation, visit their website at www.datamation.info or call them at 630-321-0601.