

Glens Falls Hospital and Adirondack Radiology Associates Improve Care and Workflow via Shared Images and Data

At a Glance

Organization

Glens Falls Hospital
Glens Falls, N.Y.

- 320-bed acute-care community hospital

Adirondack Radiology Associates
Glens Falls, N.Y. and
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

- Private practice with 14 radiologists and four outpatient locations

Solution Spotlight

- Horizon Medical Imaging™

Critical Issues

- Fragmented imaging records of patients receiving care at different facilities
- Clinician productivity and satisfaction
- Patient safety
- Spiraling healthcare costs

Results

- Enabled anytime, anywhere access to patient information, images and reports in a unified, single site
- Eliminated paper as a workflow driver and helped balance workload among radiologists
- Enhanced patient care and safety by providing clinicians with complete medical information
- Saved more than \$400,000 in film costs alone
- Added new revenue streams, including digital mammography

Faced with fragmented imaging records across a wide geographic region and facilities, Glens Falls Hospital and Adirondack Radiology Associates needed a way to effectively manage medical images and reports across the enterprise. These providers chose McKesson's picture archiving communications system (PACS) to provide a unified view of patient records and increase clinician productivity and satisfaction. Results to date include \$400,000 in overall cost savings, the ability to handle 14% more computed tomography (CT) cases, and the addition of a new line of business for digital mammography.

Challenges

Glens Falls Hospital (GFH) and its affiliated private practice radiology group, Adirondack Radiology Associates (ARA), serve more than 250,000 patients in a four-county, 4,000-square-mile area in northeastern New York. With patients and physicians dispersed throughout such a vast region, the need to "connect" and share information and images created challenges.

Even though the hospital and ARA-owned outpatient imaging centers share many patients, the two organizations had never worked from common clinical information and medical records systems. Instead they maintained patient information in separate

silos. Clinicians struggled with fragmented patient imaging records, inefficiencies due to duplicate films and manual patient reconciliation. They also had disparate views of patients when working from different facilities. Staff members spent eight to 12 hours per week tracking down films for comparison purposes, devoted two FTEs to printing, and spent more than \$400,000 on film.

Answers

To better serve patients, organizational leaders realized they needed a unified, high-quality diagnostic imaging system that would provide "anytime, anywhere" access to patient information, images and reports. Via a user-friendly graphical interface, such a system would enable clinicians to acquire, integrate, store, distribute and display all relevant current and prior images, regardless of service site. Most important, the PACS would need to interface with two separate radiology information systems and manage a common patient association scheme with a single database.

"It was crucial that imaging studies be available for viewing throughout the enterprise when a patient record was opened in the PACS, regardless of where it originated," says Dan Chernoff, M.D., Ph.D., radiologist and director of radiology services, ARA. "Performed study lists also had to be available from all

Case Study

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Dan Chernoff, M.D., Ph.D.
Radiologist and Director of Radiology Services, Adirondack Radiology Associates

sites, so the interpretation of studies from a particular point of service would not depend on the physical location of the radiologist.”

After sending a request for proposal to five different vendors, McKesson’s Horizon Medical Imaging™ PACS stood out as the only solution capable of meeting the integration needs. Other vendors required either an additional separate system or a migration to another radiology information system.

“The system’s multisite association feature allows distinct patient records from disparate sites to present a unified view of a patient, regardless of which facility creates the patient record,” explains Dr. Chernoff. “It allows all patient imaging studies to appear as one unified record, even if the studies were performed at different nonrelated facilities or placed in different registration systems. This unified record greatly reduces the possibility for error based on lack of access to – or awareness of – relevant prior studies.”

Results

With Horizon Medical Imaging in place, radiologists, referring physicians and technologists can access unified radiology results, images and worklists throughout the healthcare enterprise, dramatically improving workflow and efficiency. For example, the organization’s

14 radiologists can use the system from a variety of locations including the hospital reading room, four individual outpatient facility reading stations and their homes when on call.

“Availability of specialty expertise wherever the radiologist is physically located, instant consults, common worklists for multiple radiologists to draw from, elimination of paper as a workflow driver, and workload balancing among radiologists have been big wins for us,” relays Dr. Chernoff.

These “wins” are also paying off by enabling GFH and ARA to:

- Handle 14% more computed tomography (CT) cases per day
- Reduce overall costs by \$400,000 per year by eliminating film
- Create a new line of revenue by adding digital mammography
- Increase revenue by offering the use of the system as a regional archive for images to noncompeting healthcare providers

“Horizon Medical Imaging allows us to offer the best services to the community and gives us the financial results that enable us to succeed and expand our service offerings,” concludes Dr. Chernoff.

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