

At a Glance

Organization

Interior Health Authority
British Columbia, Canada

- Regional health authority: serves 714,000 constituents
- 37 healthcare facilities
- 17,300 employees
- 1,300 physicians

Solution Spotlight

- Horizon Medical Imaging™
- Horizon Rad Station™
- Horizon^{WP} Physician Portal

Critical Issues

- Regional PACS that connects to one RIS and one CIS
- PACS to feed future EHR
- Scaleable PACS with efficient remote access
- Implement at 37 sites within 18 months
- Fully interface with HIS and existing PACS at 12 sites

Results

- Increased radiologists' productivity 20% to 30%
- Decreased report turnaround 41% on average
- Increased peer/specialist consultation
- Reduced patient transfers

Interior Health Authority

"Power of One" Vision Provides Access to Quality Healthcare in Rural Community

Interior Health Authority (IHA) sought to implement a regional picture archiving and communication system (PACS) as the foundation for a single, image-enabled electronic health record (EHR). Key goals were instant access to images anywhere and anytime, set new standards of health services excellence, and ensure the equity of quality healthcare throughout the region, particularly in remote, rural areas. To accomplish its goals, IHA implemented an enterprisewide PACS from McKesson that led to a decrease in report turn-around-times (TATs), increase in radiologists' efficiency and a reduction in patient transfers — all resulting in safer and better patient care.

Challenges

In 2004, IHA received a \$4.8 million (Canadian) investment to implement a regional PACS, including integration of an existing PACS. IHA envisioned a shared model between 37 sites with the scaleable, regional PACS connecting to one radiology information system (RIS), one clinical information system (CIS) and ultimately a single EHR. Full implementation with efficient remote access at all sites was required within 18 months.

The overarching vision was the "power of one clinical information platform to successfully use

technology to improve patient care," explains Anne Baldwin, IHA Regional Diagnostic Imaging Manager. For IHA, the successful use of information technology to positively affect patient care relies on uniting information regardless of where it originates and the coordination of implementation projects and change management strategies.

Answers

IHA designated a project manager, formed a multidisciplinary project team and hired PACS administrators early on. After an extensive review process that included an external consultant and a request for proposal (RFP), four vendors were selected for product demonstrations and site visits.

"We found one company that was able to meet all of our demands," says Baldwin. "McKesson demonstrated superior functionality and an ability to interface with our existing IT vendors to help IHA achieve the 'power of one' concept. Plus, the company's 24-hour call line, renowned on-site training, adaptation of change management strategies and nearby service support in Vancouver further drove the final decision."

Results

"The PACS project is an overwhelming success," says Baldwin, "with an imaging system that provides high quality, fast and

Case Study

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Anne Baldwin

Regional Diagnostic

Imaging Manager

Interior Health Authority

accurate imaging services accessible from the entire region.” On time and on budget, McKesson delivered. The project included 25 new PACS sites, 205 workstations, connectivity to 80 modalities, complete integration with the hospital information system and full interfacing capabilities with the existing PACS at 12 sites.

Today, IHA is 100% filmless with few exceptions. All images and reports are fully integrated into the EHR.

“Radiologists’ productivity has increased 20% to 30% with greater reporting accuracy,” notes Baldwin. “Using Horizon Rad Station™, radiologists can view, analyze and report on an image as soon as it is captured, enabling better and faster patient diagnosis and treatment decisions. Report TATs decreased on average 41% post-PACS, and 53% at facilities without an on-site radiologist.

“It is no longer difficult to consult or clinically share patient cases,” she adds. More than three-fourths of IHA radiologists report they spend more time consulting via phone with other radiologists or physicians post-PACS and nearly 90% believe the Horizon Medical Imaging™ system has improved medical student/radiology resident training.

Patients have reaped the benefits of increased efficiency, reduced TATs and clinical consultation. Nearly

65% of radiologists access prior exams more frequently with Horizon Medical Imaging than with film, potentially reducing duplicate or unnecessary imaging studies. Rapid access to reports and images along with specialized services in smaller and midsized communities has led to a decrease in patient transfers.

Baldwin cites two examples shared by Dr. Bill Nelems, a thoracic surgeon, who reported that his ability to access images remotely via Horizon^{WP} Physician Portal and offer medical advice with PACS helped avoid two patient transfers.

Further integration of the EHR at IHA will improve financial operations and enable long-term cost savings. According to Baldwin, beyond the expected reduction in film processing costs, IHA has already realized a reduction in size and management costs for film library storage.

Perhaps most important is the impact on the entire health system. A higher quality of care is delivered equally throughout the region, which positively affects patient safety, access and affordability. Says Baldwin, “An enterprisewide PACS that feeds a single EHR promotes the standardization of best practices. Thanks to the Horizon Medical Imaging system, everyone has a complete picture of the patient.”

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