

Geisinger Health System

Healthcare

Customer Overview

In 1915, Abigail Geisinger brought Harold Foss, MD, to the rural Pennsylvania town of Danville to run her new hospital. Building on the model of his alma mater—the world-famous Mayo Clinic of Rochester, Minnesota—Dr. Foss established what has become Geisinger Health System, one of the largest rural health systems in the country. Located across 41 counties in northeast and central Pennsylvania, Geisinger has more than 600 physicians and thousands of staff members.

Imagine: an orthopedist sets a woman's fractured arm 150 miles from her home clinic. Within minutes, her local facility is able to view the clinical images, patient records and billing information. This access is extremely helpful when she goes to her own doctor to get the cast removed six weeks later. And because her records are accessible system-wide, it also makes it easier for her to get invoice copies and make payments at the facility of her choice. That kind of instant, secure access to medical information has been the holy grail of health care for years. And with the federal government's recent mandate that all U.S. health care providers implement Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems by 2015, the challenge is even more daunting. Working with Vignette, Geisinger is already there.

The Challenge

Like every health care provider, Geisinger's business was originally conducted on paper, microfiche and microfilm. In the mid-nineties, a new document system was put in place to deal with the mountains of paper and files, but it soon became clear that it lacked searchability and ease of use. When former veteran FBI computer specialist, David Partsch, was brought on as IT Program Director to deal with these growing difficulties, he immediately began pushing for a new automated document management system. "We estimated that savings from a new automated system would pay for the project within 17 months. We also identified almost \$1.5 million in imminent costs that could be avoided in the first two years," says Partsch. Geisinger's legal department chimed in with its support, projecting litigation savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars each year based on improved record storage and retention.

"We wanted to get all of Geisinger paperless," declares Dave Macko, VP of IT. "We really wanted to go enterprise-wide, including HR, billing and insurance records. We wanted to digitally store all the medical modalities including CT scans, MRIs, nuclear medicine, general X-Rays and ultrasounds. And most importantly," he emphasizes, "we wanted a single, integrated system. After an extensive search, the unanimous choice was Vignette."

The Solution

The first hurdle: what to do with Geisinger's 65 million pages of proprietary images created in the old system. "We were able to store and export everything in its native format," notes Partsch.

The long-range plan—to integrate all data and records—was also a critical consideration. The anticipated volume was huge; medical records can be useful for well over a century and the business office keeps account records for seven to ten years. "We were able to develop full integration with our EpicCare medical records system," explains Partsch. "Users can retrieve images of patient record documents directly from within their Epic User Interface. To the user, it is seamless and transparent."

The Results

For the Patients

Their histories, test results and payments are instantly available in any of the 40 Geisinger health care facilities. As backfiles grow over the years, physicians will need only split seconds to retrieve generations of medical records when tracking congenital conditions and propensities. The software organizes, assembles, stores and circulates the information from Geisinger's Billing, Claims Processing system, Clinical systems, Medical Laboratory systems, Picture Archiving System, Epic Systems Corp. patient medical records solution, TIBCO workflow and its own document imaging and report management software. The Vignette solution was also expanded to support the organization's HMO, the 215,000 subscriber Geisinger Health Plan.

For the Staff

Today, more than 4000 staff members are online. Each department is different, but all the solutions work through the Vignette infrastructure. "The capabilities are endless," Partsch projects. "Pediatrics wanted to capture Microsoft Word documents. The blood bank outputs electronic text files. Pathology needed to automate laborious processes." Almost 400 different types of content are managed with the one system.

For the Regulators

"The Vignette solution has all the auditing we needed already in place," says Partsch. "The number of things that the technology logs is incredible. For any function we do, there's an audit trail."

"Now physicians or departments create their own document libraries," Macko adds. "They store documents of any sort, including photos, videos and lectures. Our Dermatology department alone had 10,000 old 35 mm slides. These are being digitized for security and longevity, and then destroyed. But the images are available with a few keystrokes."

For the Business Office

In the business office, the improvement from the slow, original document imaging system is evident in the smiles on workers' faces.

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—David Partsch, IT Program Director, Geisinger

In Conclusion

Implementing Electronic Health Records has led to a whole new level of patient care for Geisinger. Patients get better and faster medical and business service. Clinicians are able to more effectively do their jobs. The business offices operate more efficiently. "The effect is far-reaching," says Partsch.

About Vignette

Vignette provides software and services that deliver the Web's most dynamic user experiences. The Vignette Web Experience brings rich media and engaging content to life for the world's greatest brands. Vignette is headquartered in Austin, Texas with operations worldwide. Visit www.vignette.com.