



Replacing a Legacy PACS

Wilson Memorial Hospital | Sydney, OH

Wilson Memorial Hospital had been an early adopter of PACS — in fact, they'd been using PACS for nine years when they decided to shop around for a new vendor in 2007. Here's what mattered most to them during the selection process: functionality, the ability to distribute images with ease, and providing excellent service to physicians and patients.

Challenge

"We'd been through this before," said Tony Linkmeyer, director of imaging at Wilson Memorial Hospital, located in Sydney, OH. "Our facility had gone through the PACS selection process. We knew what we needed — and we knew what our legacy PACS wasn't delivering."

With their legacy PACS, it often took 20 minutes to access a single image — and most clinicians simply won't wait that long for their images. As a result, only 30 percent of their physicians used their previous PACS system — the rest insisted on films or CDs.

Wilson Memorial draws referrals from physicians in the surrounding county, but most of their referrals — 75 percent — actually come from physicians within the four walls of the hospital. The challenge was to be able to provide excellent results to those physicians, while providing access to images to physicians beyond the four walls of the hospital — and in a way that allowed access without any IT headaches.

"With our previous PACS, staff members were spending an inordinate amount of time fetching historical images or simply figuring out where a patient was in the imaging process. In addition, our legacy system wasn't built for image distribution outside the hospital, so our referring physician population was left without a solution," said Linkmeyer.

Solution

To realize their goals, Wilson Memorial performed an extensive search for a new solution, and chose our PACS as their go forward platform for image workflow and management.

"Doctors want to access images and reports quickly," said Linkmeyer. "They want to know immediately when images and results are available. With the PACS, we now have the opportunity to shoot those images out to anyone in the state of Ohio — within seconds."

That's seconds — compared to the 20 minutes it used to take to access a single image. And, because PACS is Web-based, it's easy to access

+ CUSTOMER PROFILE

Wilson Memorial Hospital, located in Sydney, OH, is a 100-bed full service hospital that serves the residents of Shelby County and some of the surrounding communities. From behavioral health and cardiac services to emergency and surgery, Wilson Memorial provides a full array of healthcare services.

+ CUSTOMER CHALLENGE

To provide quick, easy access to images and cut down on time spent searching for historical images

+ BENEFITS

- Imaging volume: more than doubled
- Happier doctors
- Fewer costs from CDs and film
- Continued growth without pain
- Real-time insight into patient status
- Ease of deployment

“Our imaging volume has more than doubled over the last few years, and we now have happier doctors, fewer costs associated with CDs and film — and we can continue to grow without pain.”

Tony Linkmeyer
Director of Imaging, Wilson Memorial Hospital

images, regardless of the referring physician’s physical location. Already, 70 percent of their referring physicians have made the move to PACS.

Seventy-five percent of Wilson Memorial’s referrals come from doctors inside the hospital, but the hospital also gets referrals from specialists throughout the state of Ohio. Now physicians both inside and outside the hospital’s four walls have quick access to images — and, with RealTime Worklist, they instantly see the status of a patient’s exam, including the availability of results.

While Wilson Memorial’s staff members used to spend a lot of time fetching historical exams, the architecture of PACS ensures that all images are available online all the time — with instant access at the click of a button. This frees up staff members to focus on other tasks, such as providing customer service to patients, new strategic initiatives, or marketing outreach.

Benefits

“Our imaging volume has more than doubled over the last few years,” said Linkmeyer. “And, with the PACS, we now have happier doctors, fewer costs associated with CDs and film — and we can continue to grow without pain.”

The power of PACS has also been felt well beyond the Radiology Department, according to Bruce Koch MD, an emergency room physician, who values having real-time insight into his patients in the healthcare delivery chain.

“It’s much easier to log in to PACS than it is to have to call the Radiology Department when I need an update on one of my patients. PACS is easy to use — and the dedicated Emergency Department worklist streamlines the review process.”

With its intuitive Web-based viewer and powerful RealTime Worklist, PACS has given a “new face” to the Radiology Department at Wilson Memorial. Because of the ease of deployment and training, Wilson Memorial has been able to quickly implement Merge’s solutions across the hospital and beyond.

“Having the PACS is a sigh of relief,” said Jeff Partee, former CIO at Wilson Memorial. “We had no idea how much the market had progressed while we were stagnating on our legacy system. Both Tony and I pushed for this one — and we haven’t once regretted our decision.”

Having a high tech solution like PACS has modernized Wilson Memorial to such an extent that it actually feels like a much larger hospital. “Implementing solutions like Merge’ helps us feel ‘big,’” said Linkmeyer. “We now feel on par or ahead of other hospitals in Ohio, since our sphere of influence now extends throughout the state.”

