

Digitech Systems implements electronic records

CLIENT: Children's Hospital of New Orleans

DIGITECH RESELLER: Superior Data Services, San Antonio, TX

PROBLEM: Growing paper filing system was difficult to manage and costly

SOLUTION: PaperFlow™, PaperVision® Enterprise

RECOGNIZED BENEFIT: "The system is so easy to use that once the staff are trained, the only question I sometimes get is "What's my password? I forgot it." We're very pleased."
~ Michelle Hermann,
Director of Medical Records

PaperVision® Enterprise provides cost savings and compliance for Children's Hospital

The Children's Hospital of New Orleans is the only full-service hospital exclusively for children in Louisiana. With almost 180,000 patient visits per year, their paper-based patient health record system was becoming an unmanageable problem.

According to a Nucleus Research ROI analysis, the hospital has recognized \$822,000 in benefits since implementing PaperVision® Enterprise in 2004. Best of all, the system has helped them continue toward their goal of "providing the very best healthcare possible for the whole child."

Key Benefits

- 103% ROI and 22 month payback period verified by Nucleus Research
- Decreased document retrieval times from 20-30 minutes to 1-2 minutes
- More than 1.86 Terabytes of data securely managed and available
- Training for more than 200 users took less than a week

The Situation

In 1955, Elizabeth Miller Robin established the Crippled Children's Hospital as a rehabilitation facility exclusively for children in response to the polio epidemic following World War II. In 1976, they expanded to become a full service hospital for children and the name was changed to the Children's Hospital. The hospital is a not-for-profit organization governed by a board of trustees made up of community volunteers. Any revenue that is generated is used to operate the hospital and expand or advance the services it offers. The hospital staff tries hard to make care available to as many children as possible and provides millions of dollars of uncompensated care each year.

The New Orleans Hospital serves almost 8,000 inpatient visitors and more than 170,000 outpatient visitors each year. A paper-based patient file was kept for each individual who received care at the hospital, resulting in a huge number of files to manage. Document retention was becoming an issue. Sometimes case files for individual patients got very large due to frequent visits and the need to retain all records for ten years. The hospital also had to keep detailed patient information for people who came once and never returned. The paper system was getting out of hand.

Due to the sheer volume of information in the system, retrieval time was lengthy. At times, it took too long – especially during critical Emergency Room (ER) visits, where every second can count. During the day, a file was generally available within 20-30 minutes of when the Records Department received the request. But, requests that came in the evening or overnight, when there was limited Records staff on duty, could take as long as 1 hour to process. This could mean delaying a vital piece of data needed for a diagnosis.

Under pressure from HIPAA regulations to convert to electronic health records (EHR) for confidentiality and security, the Children's Hospital began to explore electronic document and content management. They were looking for a system that would be easy to use, provide users with access to information quickly, and would allow multiple people to view documents simultaneously. They also wanted the conversion to ease their paper storage burden, while enabling them to be HIPAA compliant.

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The Solution

Superior Data Services, a Digitech Systems reseller, implemented PaperVision Enterprise to manage and retrieve EHRs at the hospital in 2001. More than 200 users have access to the PaperVision Enterprise system, and training them took less than one week. Many documents and file types are now securely stored and managed within the system. Michelle Hermann, Director of Medical Records states, "the system is so flexible that it can store multiple types of files. It doesn't restrict the end user based on what kind of document they have and it's helpful to know that the Digitech Systems products aren't built just for medical facilities but can be used in many different ways."

The system proved so easy to use, that the hospital began scanning their own files, with PaperFlow™ in February 2004. The Records Department and the ER have converted all their files from 1997 to present day into electronic format, and the PaperVision Enterprise system is now home to 1.86 terabytes of data.

Recognized benefits

Among the key benefits that were immediately apparent were better patient care and quicker turnaround times for the ER. When a doctor or nurse needs a patient's medical history, they simply look the data up for themselves at the desk in the ER or place a quick phone call to Records. They have decreased document retrieval times from 20-30 minutes per request to only 1-2 minutes. Consequently, customer service has improved as patient's needs are addressed more quickly and with better information at the doctor's fingertips.

The hospital needed more storage space for documents but preferred to put their resources into expanding and advancing care. The new system has eliminated roughly a year and half of the storage space in their file room, and the Records Department was able to avoid hiring additional personnel to manage paper files. Due, in part, to the space and dollar savings recognized from the electronic system, the hospital is currently expanding the Emergency Room to provide additional care to patients.

PaperVision Enterprise has streamlined chart audits for patients. These audits are conducted monthly for all ER and outpatients and daily for inpatients. It used to take hours to compile the data, but now it takes only minutes.

Best of all, the new system is fully HIPAA compliant. The hospital uses audit and reporting capabilities to track who viewed a document and for what reason. An enhanced auditing feature allows them to build allowed distribution lists and to track records when they are sent offsite to a referred physician or the CDC.

About Superior Data Services

Superior Data Services (SDS) is a unit of South Texas Technologies Group, LLC, based in San Antonio. The SDS team implements a wide range of solutions designed to increase efficiency and reduce operating costs for organizations. SDS offers a range of ECM systems, allowing customers to harness their information and maximize their capabilities. A Digitech reseller since 2001, SDS has been converting businesses to a paperless model while realizing millions of dollars in savings. They frequently partner with SOURCECORP to provide custom implementations.

To learn more about SDS visit their website at www.sdstexas.com or call 1-210-684-SCAN (7226).

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