University Hospitals, Seidman Cancer Center

Streamlining external record and image retrieval while eliminating external imaging CDs saves time, reduces duplicate procedures and positively impacts the patient’s experience of care. Providers across the organization have historical information before the patients first appointment, and can reliably, and instantly view and collaborate on diagnostic-quality images, using the eHealthViewer® ZF.

“Being able to electronically request and reliably access external records and images has greatly improved our internal workflows and efficiency of care,” explains the Director of Patient and Community Programs at the University Hospitals Seidman Cancer Center in Cleveland, Ohio.

Patients and providers alike are reaping the benefits from eHealth Technologies’ Intelligent Health Record Aggregation Service. Critical external patient records and medical images are retrieved and electronically delivered in a single, organized and quality checked package, before the patient’s first appointment. The delivery of pathology slides is also managed by eHealth Technologies.

“Our providers now access historical records and images, right from our systems, usually within 48 hours of the request. Information sharing across the organization is streamlined—especially for images, which can be viewed in diagnostic-quality, from any secure browser with the eHealthViewer ZF, or from our PACS.”

Improving customer service

Tracking down records and patient images often takes a string of phone calls, faxes and medical release requests. Teams of University Hospitals’ Nurse Navigators would help their patients.

Nurse Navigators were relieved when eHealth Technologies’ changed all that, by collecting patient consent, making external requests, managing those requests, checking the accuracy, ensuring the completeness of the data, and delivering the medical records and images directly to their internal systems. Nine specialties of care at UH Seidman have been using eHealth Technologies’ Intelligent Health Record Aggregation Service and eHealthViewer ZF, since August 2012.

Access to diagnostic-quality images is reliable, no more lost or problem CDs. Tumor boards, surgical procedures and of course, the patients’ first visit, are efficient, as all images and records are accessible, with a click.
An image revolution

“eHealth Technologies has made things so much easier,” says Barbara Higgins, CNS, Oncology Nurse Navigator, UH Seidman Cancer Center. “I’ve worked 20 years in a film dominated specialty. When an image CD doesn’t open, is lost, or misplaced our surgical specialties and radiological team can’t render a decision. We would spend a tremendous amount of time looking for disks and jumping through hoops trying to get another CD made.” Diagnostic-quality X-rays, CT and MR scans, ultrasound studies and ECGs are now available and accessible as part of the patients’ record. “We have seen internal image workflow management go from 40-60 minutes to about 10 minutes per patient.” These internal workflow improvements do not include the time that is saved attempting to acquire the external historical medical information.

The immediate accessibility of images has been especially helpful to the Tumor Board, a multi-disciplinary conference of physicians that reviews many cases, back to back. The convenience of having images readily available reduces delays in decisions for the physicians and improves patient care as a result. “There is great peace of mind from simply knowing the records or images are accessible… the greatest thing of all is the reduced number of duplicated unreimbursed exams patients have to take because their records or images are lost or do not load properly. There’s the expense and the safety concern to consider.”

Staff satisfaction

The biggest return on investment for most nurse navigators, Higgins continues, has been the time savings in collecting and importing data. She estimates the entire retrieval process took an average of 90 minutes per patient and now only takes about nine minutes. The time we save on a per patient basis is great. It also saves mental stress. There’s no need to make follow up phone calls to make sure a patient understood or to make arrangements for a courier to get records here. I’ve been doing this work since 1994 and with eHealth Technologies, it makes things seamless.”