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Image Exchange Customer Q&A

HealtheConnections has been an eHealth Connect® Image Exchange customer since 2011. Early on, before introducing Transfer-to-PACS, we often heard comments like, "I occasionally want to view images on the HIE portal, but what I really need is the ability to import studies of interest." HealtheConnections' successful implementation of Transfer-to-PACS has led to streamlined image access, increased usage, and elevated the value provided to members of the HIE community.

What features and functionality were users looking for when you first launched?
When we initially started working with eHealth Technologies the goal was to provide one-stop access to our participants for both any imaging report and the accompanying radiology study done within Central New York. Prior to establishing our imaging network, our participants had quick access to review the reports, but had to wait for an image disc to arrive by courier, mail or patient delivery before they could review the accompanying images. A process that used to take hours or days could now be completed in just minutes.

How did those needs change over time?
While the service was very successful, we often heard feedback that our imaging network would be more useful if they were able to download and view the images locally. Based on this input we began to look into adding Transfer-to-PACS functionality for our entire imaging network.

At what point did you consider adding enhanced image viewing functionality and what drove this decision?
We had several discussions with our partner organizations and determined that Transfer-to-PACS functionality was the right solution for us and would benefit our community in the following ways.

- **Workflow flexibility & chart preparation** — Not all organizations were using our imaging solution in the same way and most of them were concerned about the time required for clinicians to look up information and transfer images. Transfer-to-PACS addressed both these concerns by allowing our partners to more seamlessly inject images from HealtheConnections into their existing workflows without requiring any major changes, and in doing so avoided putting any additional work on clinicians.

- **Service speed & reliability** — One of the biggest complaints we heard about viewing images from within our clinical portal was an auto logout security feature that caused a delay in accessing necessary information. Transfer-to-PACS addressed this issue by allowing our users a way to start any required image transfers before they would be needed. Reducing reliance on outside systems and storing images locally gave users peace of mind and built trust in the imaging network.

What benefits have users experienced, now that they share images across the HIE community utilizing Transfer-to-PACS?

Within our region we have 41 connected imaging systems that can access image studies from each other using our network. The network has provided significant improvements in the following ways.

- **Improved Patient Care** – Our customers have shared the overwhelmingly positive impact we have had on their ability to care for patients. We've been told, it's "a game changer." In the past, patients and caregivers had a lot of legwork to do prior to their appointment—requesting records and images by fax or phone calls, then waiting for their arrival. Even with a place just a few miles away, it might take up to 5 days to have a CD mailed. For most appointments, patients can't be seen or have a test completed until after these records were received. With HealtheConnections, caregivers have immediate access to reports and images, eliminating delays. This helps our partners provide quality healthcare and timely reports.

- **Cost Savings & Efficiency** – We have many large organizations that no longer need to create or import any imaging discs because the studies are significantly easier and faster to obtain from our imaging network. This efficiency drove growth in our community as organizations developed substantial trust in our product and compelled their partners to use it exclusively. Making this change resulted in savings in both time and material to all organizations for studies they generate and studies they need to access from other organizations.

What advice would you give to an HIE organization considering adding this type of functionality?

We were able to make the biggest impact and address the most concerns through our adoption of Transfer-to-PACS. This service addressed concerns voiced by our customers that were universal to any large imaging network. The rollout of Transfer-to-PACS allowed us to completely address those concerns and to vastly increase both the adoption and usage of our network.

About HealtheConnections

HealtheConnections is a Qualified Entity (QE) of the Statewide Health Information Network of New York (SHIN-NY). HealtheConnections operates the health information exchange (HIE) for 26 counties of New York state, facilitates initiatives in alignment with state population health agendas, and develops value-based analytics solutions in support of value-based care structures. The HIE connects 1,400 participating organizations, across 3,400 locations, supporting 10,000 doctors. Learn more by visiting healtheconnections.org.