

Laserfiche ECM Blogs

No Bones About It

Written by Laserfiche Staff

Central Oregon Radiology Associates seeks to be the provider of choice for patients and physicians, and the employer of choice for staff. As Marico Oliveira, the organization's former director of operations and current director of human resources, explains, Laserfiche plays a key role in helping Central Oregon Radiology Associates accomplish both aspects of this mission.

In the past, the organization had a records room for films, reports and patient files, and a number of filing cabinets to store billing-related documents. Although staff had devised a fairly reliable indexing system for each of these items, lost and misfiled documents were a significant problem—and a definite drain on resources.

“Around thirty percent of the time, we'd need a document that was misfiled or 'temporarily lost,' meaning that it was probably sitting on somebody's desk,” Oliveira remembers. “Searches for these documents could take anywhere from five minutes to three days. We had several staff members who became so skilled at hunting down lost documents that we started calling them our 'sleuths.’”

With an eye toward streamlining work processes and eliminating misplaced paperwork, Central Oregon Radiology Associates developed a plan for digitizing nearly every aspect of its operations. This initiative involved three key components: a picture archiving and communication system (PACS), to store and manage radiological images; a radiology information system (RIS), to manage appointment scheduling, transcriptions and billing; and a digital document management system, to store and manage consent forms, explanation of benefits forms (EOBs) and other documentation.

Oliveira says that selecting the right document management system was one of the easiest parts of this initiative. “Our Laserfiche reseller, JPI Data Resource, did a demonstration at our RIS vendor's user group meeting, and we recognized that Laserfiche was precisely what we needed. We saw that the system's security features and auditing capabilities would help us meet HIPAA requirements, and the ability to store documentation electronically fit perfectly with our decision to 'go paperless' throughout our organization.”

Staff now scan a number of items—from patients' drivers licenses and insurance cards to consent forms, EOBs and order-related paperwork—into the Laserfiche repository, where they're stored as easily-accessible TIFF files. As part of the scanning process,

staff apply an electronic template to each file to record the metadata that will be most useful for search purposes. “For registration-related documents, we capture such metadata as the patient’s name, Social Security number and date of birth, as well as the date of service,” Oliveira says. “For billing-related documents, we capture additional information, including the document’s type, the date the document is posted and the batch number.”

Thanks to the system’s search tools, staff can now easily locate relevant documents when patients, physicians or insurers call with questions. Staff also appreciate the system’s “fuzzy” search functionality, which enables them to find documents containing words that partially match the search terms they specify. “These searches are particularly useful when I don’t know the precise spelling of a patient’s name,” Oliveira says.

In addition to its powerful search capabilities, Laserfiche includes a number of other features that help staff work more efficiently. For example, the Quick Fields module minimizes data entry errors by automatically populating template fields with information captured from the document. Electronic redaction tools enable staff to obscure sensitive information, which is especially useful when they need to send EOBs—which typically contain information related to multiple patients—to a secondary payer. “In the past, we’d usually photocopy the EOB form, manually black-out information that applied to other patients, and then photocopy the ‘doctored’ document,” Oliveira says. “Now, we can easily redact this information in Laserfiche, which not only saves time but helps us ensure that we don’t inadvertently release sensitive patient information.”

Oliveira also appreciates the system’s ease of use. “Going digital with our radiological images was quite a hurdle to overcome,” she notes. “After that, Laserfiche was a cakewalk. It’s very user-friendly and easy to learn.”

Oliveira recently transitioned to a new position as the organization’s human resources director, and she notes that Laserfiche delivers the same benefits to the HR department that it’s brought to the rest of the organization. “We manage all of our personnel files in Laserfiche, and we scan payroll and credentialing documentation into the repository as well,” she says. “Thanks to Laserfiche, we have less paperwork to handle, we make fewer photocopies and we spend less time searching for documents. Most importantly, sensitive information is a lot more secure than in the past, when we stored everything in filing cabinets.”

Central Oregon Radiology Associates is currently in the process of upgrading to a newer version of its RIS software; as part of the upgrade process, they’re working with

their Laserfiche reseller to integrate this software with their document repository. When the integration is complete, staff will be able to access Laserfiche documents from within the RIS application. “We can’t wait for this integration,” Oliveira says. “The time savings will be enormous, especially for billing-related processes, such as looking up claims.”

Oliveira doesn’t equivocate when asked to describe the benefits that Laserfiche has brought to her organization: “I can state without a doubt that Laserfiche helps us put our energy into serving patients, rather than into searching for lost documents.”



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