

Laserfiche ECM Blogs

Fertile Fields for Increased Efficiency

Written by Meghann Wooster



Fertility treatment is an intensive process that requires sensitivity and an understanding of the physical and emotional aspects of a patient's fertility problems. But when doctors don't have fast and easy access to all of their patients' medical data, it can be difficult to be as responsive as desired.

With ten clinics and two in-vitro fertilization (IVF) centers located throughout the greater Chicago area, the Fertility Centers of Illinois (FCI) already had an Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system in place. However, the ArtWorks EMR system only stored patients' current, FCI-based medical data—historical medical records were kept as paper files, as were lab results, surgery reports and other outside correspondence.

After turning to Laserfiche in order to convert the processing of insurance company explanation of benefit (EOB) reports from paper to a digital system in May 2006, FCI quickly realized that its use of Laserfiche could be expanded to encompass additional medical data—such as lab results and X-rays—that was not stored in ArtWorks.

According to Bonnie Kelly, IT supervisor at FCI, **“When we switched from paper to Laserfiche for EOBs, the patient account representatives were working with it like veterans by the end of the first day.** Over the next several weeks, we saw so much improvement and so few problems that we felt confident that we could move on to patient charts.”

Laserfiche reseller TKB Associates integrated ArtWorks and Laserfiche, working in conjunction with the ArtWorks support team at IntegraMed® America, Inc. (NASDAQ: INMD), FCI's New York-based national network. “With the integration,” says Kelly, “our doctors have complete access to every bit of their patients' records, both current and historical.”

In July 2006, the FCI clinic in Glenview began converting its paper charts into digital Laserfiche files. **Eleven weeks later, nearly 7,000 charts had been scanned into the system, freeing up enough storage space to create a new nurses' station.**

Quick Capture with Quick Fields

According to Kelly, the conversion process was swift because Laserfiche Quick Fields, a high-volume document capture and processing tool, makes scanning “foolproof and easy.”

FCI knew that it wanted its digital repository of charts to be alphabetical by patient name, with each chart divided into 16 sections, including Demographics, Insurance, Previous Medical Records, Ultrasounds and X-Rays, Lab Results and so on. With the help of Jerry Breitbarth at TKB, FCI used Quick Fields to design a process that accelerates scanning and makes the electronic information readily accessible:

- FCI created a template in the ArtWorks EMR that prints a collection of header sheets for each chart.
- Header sheets contain a keyword (NEWF) that tells Laserfiche it is dealing with a new record.
- Patient’s last name, first name, middle initial, social security number and birthday are printed onto the header. There is a new header sheet for each chart section.
- Quick Fields reads the information off the header sheets and creates a file (including subfolders for each chart division) for each new patient.
- Laserfiche files new charts alphabetically within the folder structure, and files each patient’s documents within the appropriate subfolders in their chart.

This way, people do not have to stop and tell Laserfiche where each page of the chart is supposed to go; they simply print the header sheets, replace the chart dividers with the appropriate header sheets and scan the charts—Laserfiche does the rest.

To date, **nine of FCI’s clinics have fully transitioned their patient charts to Laserfiche**, with another clinic and the two IVF centers next in line.

Running Smarter

For Tracy Guzman-Barron, administrative services supervisor at FCI, there are three major benefits associated with the company’s Laserfiche implementation:

- Increased information access.
- Enhanced security and easier compliance with HIPAA and other privacy regulations.
- Savings from reduced couriering, storage and paper usage.

First, says Guzman-Barron, **“In an emergency, our doctors don’t have to wait around for someone to retrieve a patient’s chart.** With Laserfiche, you get instant access.” It’s also next to impossible, Guzman-Barron reveals, to lose a chart in Laserfiche. “Even if something gets misread and misfiled, if it’s in Laserfiche, you can use the system’s

search functionality to track it down. That's not the case when you're dealing with fifty, sixty or seventy boxes of paper files."

Second, in terms of data security, "It's much safer having patient information in a secure, electronic repository than to have paper copies of records lying around on people's desks," Guzman-Barron says. "No one can access Laserfiche without a log-in and a password. Even then, everyone's level of access is tailored specifically to their role and responsibilities. For example," she adds, "there are only two of us who have the ability to delete." In addition, Laserfiche Audit Trail tracks and records user activity within the repository. "If anyone is doing anything incorrectly," Guzman-Barron says, "I can address it with that person right away."

Third, FCI has experienced a wealth of savings in a number of different areas. "With Laserfiche, **we reduced our off-site storage bill by \$500 a month,**" says Guzman-Barron. "As we scan and destroy old paper medical records, the cost for record retention will continue to decrease." Documents are shredded after they've been scanned into Laserfiche, and several of the clinics been able to convert old storage space into office space as a result. And because electronic records can quickly and easily be printed and mailed or faxed to authorized healthcare providers, **FCI saves \$50-\$75 in couriering and processing costs per chart** with Laserfiche.

Furthermore, in these tight economic times, Laserfiche is helping FCI to do more with less. In fact, when the company had an internal reorganization and had to let go of five administrative staff members, it was able to continue doing the same amount of work within Laserfiche thanks to the system's ease of use. "We used to have seven dedicated staff members who scanned everything into Laserfiche," says Guzman-Barron. "Now two of us go to the different clinics and train the office staff on how to scan and organize things for themselves. We create centralized templates and standards and then give the offices the flexibility to import files as they see fit."

She adds, "This isn't a hard system to learn. I was a novice when I started here in 2007, but it was extremely easy to get into the swing of things. **All of our doctors use Laserfiche. It saves us a ton of time, money and frustration.**"

Looking Ahead

As FCI gets close to having all patient charts at all of its locations securely stored in Laserfiche, it is planning to expand its system use to various other departments. According to Guzman-Barron, Human Resources will get the next big efficiency boost. After that will come Payroll.

“Laserfiche makes everything easier,” concludes Guzman-Barron. “It’s been a godsend for us.”



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