



CASE STUDY

University of Louisville Hospital Treats Patient Records with Alchemy

"We've saved many thousands of dollars in storage costs alone. And physicians no longer have to wait hours for a patient's chart."—clinical system analyst, University of Louisville Hospital

Industry	Healthcare, Provider
Challenge	Patient care; HIPAA compliance; high costs of paperwork
Solution	Captaris Alchemy Document Management suite
Results	Saved hundreds of thousands of dollars on storage and labor; saved thousands of employee hours; cut patient chart delivery time from hours to only minutes; improved bone marrow treatment research.

BACKGROUND

The University of Louisville Hospital is part of University of Louisville Healthcare, the region's leading academic, research and teaching medical center. Patients benefit from the latest medical and technology advances, often long before they become available in non-teaching settings. University Hospital's Stroke Center was recently designated a primary stroke center by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and was the first hospital in the state of Kentucky to have the designation.

THE CHALLENGE

Healthcare professionals know how important good record keeping is to their success. Without reliable and fast access to patient records, physicians would have difficulty providing proper care, hospital billing departments would struggle to keep track of patient insurance and payment information, and patients needing special services would not get the care they required. Additionally, all patient records must be managed in compliance with the Healthcare Insurance and Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA), the federal regulation requiring healthcare organizations to protect the privacy of patient information. Given all the insurance paperwork, release forms, medical records, bills, patient history, and related documents generated in a typical hospital, managing this massive amount of sensitive information is no easy task.

THE SOLUTION

The University of Louisville Hospital selected Alchemy Document Management software to help them manage their business, protect patient information and provide the best care. "In the HIPAA compliance world, we believe Alchemy, with its role-based access control and audit tracking features, will continue to be very efficient for retrieval of the patient health information under its control," said Walter Zupances, RHIA, CPC-H, and the director of health information management for the hospital.

The hospital deployed a configuration including Alchemy Server, the Web Server extension to allow access to information via a Web interface, and the Scan extension that allows them to add paper documents from 21 scanning workstations. Alchemy quickly created a secure archive of patient information, including medical images, paper-based documents, forms, enterprise reports, email and hard to access legacy system data and manages the information in a centralized and secure location where it is addressable by common identifiers. Compared to complex enterprise imaging products, Alchemy was a snap to install, requires few resources to maintain, and very limited training is necessary for end-users due to its friendly interfaces. Hospital staff can focus on getting their jobs done rather than taking time to learn new systems.

THE RESULTS

The hospital has saved hundreds of thousands of dollars and thousands of employee hours.

The economy of storage space was one of the first benefits the hospital realized. Staff members scan approximately 350 documents per day into several databases, the largest of which is twelve gigabytes. The billing department used to maintain a 30' x 20' room devoted to file storage. Now, instead of expanding their storage as many hospitals are doing, the University of Louisville Hospital is reducing theirs and freeing valuable space for other uses.

"We've saved many thousands of dollars in storage costs alone," says Michael Boston, the clinical system analyst. "We have to pay a monthly fee for a lot of the paperwork that isn't stored at the hospital. That fee is being reduced dramatically now that new files no longer need to be stored at a remote facility". In addition, the employee who used to be in charge of maintaining the on-site storage area has been reassigned to other tasks, saving the hospital money by optimizing their staff.

One of the greatest overall benefits the hospital has seen is the economy of time and efficiency for hospital personnel. Physicians and nurses no longer have to wait hours for a patient's chart to be pulled from the Medical Record Department for details on the patient's last Emergency Room or doctor visit. They just look the information up in Alchemy, which takes only minutes. Additionally, the billing office dramatically reduced unnecessary repeat telephone calls simply by looking up patient registrations in Alchemy, including copies of the patient's insurance card and payment history.

The hospital also maintains a database for the National Bone Marrow Donor Program that requires information storage for as long as ten years. With paper records, this information was difficult to search, and locating critical records was time-consuming and error prone. Alchemy makes locating crucial documents almost effortless.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Captaris Business Information Delivery solutions help organizations of all sizes automate the information and document flow throughout the information lifecycle (capture, process, deliver, manage and archive). With a comprehensive suite of software and services, Captaris helps organizations to grow revenues and increase profits while meeting compliance goals. Through a global distribution network of leading enterprise technology partners, Captaris has installed more than 90,000 systems in 95 countries in companies of all sizes, including the entire Fortune 100. For more information, visit www.captaris.com or call 1.800.443.0806.

©2005 All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted, transcribed, stored in a retrieval system, or translated into any language in any form by any means without the written permission of Captaris. Captaris products Alchemy, Interchange, RightFax and Captaris Workflow are trademarks of Captaris. All other company, brand and product names are the property and/or trademarks of their respective companies.