

case study



Cardiovascular Center of Lompoc Patient Records Available 24/7

The Cardiovascular Center of Lompoc (CCL) provides patients with non-invasive diagnostic studies of the heart, venous and arterial systems. Patients are referred to the Center by local doctors.

Documents

As a growing practice treating more and more patients every year, CCL spent a lot of time and money filing and storing patient records. Each new patient meant more records to process, track and store. "It's tedious work to file and organize these records and it never ends. There are always new patient records coming in," says Karen Munoz, the employee who handles billing for the center out of her home office.

Not only are patient records difficult to manage due to their large sizes, but because CCL is required to keep these records on file for seven years they were forced to keep the overflow in an off-site storage facility.

Another problem for the office was the labor-intensive task of having the daily patient records prepared for the doctor. Given the number of patients and records, it was becoming difficult to retrieve the files.

Additionally, the center's fax machine generated a large amount of paper-based information that needed to be managed. Each day the office received requests for medical records, referrals, prescriptions and EKGs for its patients.

Solution

Ms. Munoz casually talked with Dr. Coughlin, founder of the Cardiovascular Center of Lompoc, about how he could help eliminate the paper moving throughout his office. She recommended looking into the electronic document management software program called DocuWare.

Dr. Coughlin knew that he was going to have to do something to improve the patient/file situation, and an imaging and document management solution sounded perfect.

"DocuWare was easy to understand. In fact it sounded deceptively simple," recalls Dr. Coughlin. "I had to see it in action." As a result, Dr. Coughlin and Ms. Munoz went to Document Scanning Systems, Inc., an Authorized DocuWare Partner, to see a demonstration of DocuWare.

During the demonstration, the benefits of working with DocuWare were reiterated: easy and fast access to information, improved record security and the elimination of ongoing costs associated with maintaining paper files. One of Dr. Coughlin's primary concerns was to find out if DocuWare could easily integrate with the software his office used for patient records, scheduling and word processing. Document Scanning Systems, Inc. showed Dr. Coughlin and Ms. Munoz how DocuWare integrated with other software programs. Seeing this convinced the doctor to implement DocuWare.

Proof of Concept

Once DocuWare was installed, their new local area network allowed them to access files regardless of which computer an employee was using. Additionally, Dr. Coughlin's laptop was configured so he would also have access to patient records remotely.

Today, CCL is digitizing almost every type of document they have and storing it in their DocuWare system. Once in DocuWare, these documents are easily retrieved by typing in key pieces of information. For example, a CCL employee types in a patient's name, study, study date, or a patient's date of birth. In a few seconds, the record appears on the desktop. Rather than printing paper, faxes, they are received, distributed and stored via DocuWare.

Installation Summary

DocuWare is used daily by Dr. Coughlin, his partners and his staff. It has been so well received, because it has eliminated the frustration of dealing with so many paper records, and simplified many daily tasks.

"DocuWare has helped extend my work as a doctor for another ten years. That's how much stress it has eliminated for this office. By the time I've exchanged pleasantries with the referring physician, I've opened the patient's file and I am ready to discuss the study results."

*Dr. Barry Coughlin,
Founder,
Cardiovascular Center of Lompoc*

The Task

- Reduce the amount of paper
- Improve work flow
- Save time and money

Appointed Modules

- DocuWare
- INTERNET-SERVER
- RECOGNITION

The Benefits

- Reduced costs
- Secure and immediate access to patient records
- Improved efficiency and patient relations

"I can do billing without leaving my desk to find a chart or make a phone call to get the information I need. I have everything I need at my fingertips," says Ms. Munoz. "It's made my job so much easier!"

Dr. Coughlin agrees, "It [DocuWare] has exceeded my expectations, especially in terms of its reliability. I always find the documents I need, when I needed them." The DocuWare system has made a number of changes – all for the better for CCL.

CCL and Document Scanning Systems, Inc. are working on another ambitious project of attaching a streaming digital video file of a patient's ultrasound to the patient's record in DocuWare. When successful, these files can be viewed on a computer and, CCL will be able to eliminate the hundreds of video tapes now stored in their office. Additionally, CCL is considering replacing their pre-printed forms and worksheets with scanned ones. CCL will scan the necessary forms into their DocuWare system, then they will print them as needed. This function is less expensive than the preprinted forms.

The DocuWare system has proven to be a good addition to CCL. "It's much more wonderful than I expected it to be," says Ms. Munoz. "I expected that it [DocuWare] would just be a better way to store patient records, that it would replace the file cabinets in the office. But it's turned out to be so much more."

Dr. Coughlin gives high marks to DocuWare as well. "DocuWare has helped extend my work as doctor for another ten years," says Dr. Coughlin. "That's how much stress it has eliminated for this office."

The Benefits in Detail

Patient Encounter Reports Go Digital

Today, CCL no longer generates paper during the creation of patient encounter reports. Technicians record an ultrasound on a VHS tape, Dr. Coughlin then reviews the tape and using a dictaphone, he dictates the results. Finally, an assistant listens to the dictation, transcribes the doctor's comments by typing them into one of several DocuWare templates created specifically for these reports. After the report is in DocuWare, Dr. Coughlin can open and review it. When approved, he attaches his electronic signature to the document, and the report is ready to be stored in the patient's record folder in DocuWare. Now more easily than ever, it can be faxed or e-mailed directly from DocuWare to the patient's primary doctor. According to Ms. Munoz, everyone is thrilled with the new paperless process.

Respond to Doctor Calls on the Spot

All the patient studies are available at the click of a mouse! Dr. Coughlin can take calls from patient's primary doctors, pull up the patient's study on the computer and discuss it with the their doctor. "By the time I've exchanged pleasantries with the referring physician, I've opened the patient's file and I am ready to discuss the study results."

Patient Records Available 24/7

Dr. Coughlin no longer has to stop at his office to pick up a patient study while on his way to the hospital. Instead, he can access his studies any time – day or night, using DocuWare's INTERNET-SERVER module. Through DocuWare, INTERNET-SERVER provides Internet or intranet access to documents stored in a DocuWare file cabinet at the Center. Dr. Coughlin can plug-in his laptop computer or use a PC with a secured Internet connection to access his patient's files via the Web. The remote access provided by the INTERNET-SERVER module is especially useful for emergency situations and during hours when the office is closed.

Reduced Costs

The DocuWare solution eliminates the expense for CCL to store and maintain older records off-site.

CCL Uses Less Paper

Records are no longer printed because CCL employees can look at documents anytime on their own computers. This has resulted in less printing and photocopying. In fact, Dr. Coughlin noted that one month after they began using DocuWare, the number of photocopies made on his copy machine had decreased by 3,000 copies.

CCL's fax application also helps to reduce paper use in the office. All incoming faxes are now automatically routed to a central DocuWare workstation, thereby eliminating the automatic printing of faxes.

For more information
please visit our website
at www.docuware.com