

Omtool's Healthcare Suite: A User's Perspective

Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital (SNMH)

Document Imaging to Create the Electronic Medical Record

The Challenge

- Annual increases in document and form costs
- Desire to move to EMRs
- Phase transition to electronic documents

The Solution

- Eliminate process and efficiencies at patient registration first
- Reduce number of pre-printed forms
- Patient documentation captured electronically



According to a Price Waterhouse Coopers study, 500 billion paper documents are created annually in healthcare and these paper documents account for 25% of every healthcare dollar spent. This equates to a total cost of \$125 billion per year. Like many other healthcare organizations, Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital (180,000 patient visits/yr), located in Grass Valley, CA, faced the challenge of mounting costs associated with paper documents, their storage and accessibility.

SNMH's vision is best explained by Mark Freitas, Business Office and IT Director; "Our viewpoint was that a complete EMR solution for the hospital was necessary and we had been building towards that. There were very few hospitals that had an EMR solution. We found about 5-10% had implemented a solution and a number of hospitals that had abandoned that strategy because the return on investment was not there. We did not want to go down the same road. We started looking at how we could develop a sound strategy and look for early returns."

Creating the Paperless Environment

The first step in achieving their objective was to find a vendor who offered healthcare providers the ability to move towards a paperless work environment at their own pace, using an integrated family of document management and imaging solutions. Omtool, Ltd. was the partner SNMH selected to deliver these solutions, in a phased approach, to address their unique challenges. SNMH's first priority was to reduce costs associated with the patient registration process — with particular focus on preprinted forms and process inefficiencies associated with the capture, routing and storage of patient documentation. This included insurance cards, condition of admission (consent), notice of privacy practices, physician order, payer eligibility, authorization documents and living wills.

“ \$125 billion per year spent on paper documents and healthcare. ”

Source: Price Waterhouse Coopers

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Streamline Processes

Step 1

Identify pre-printed forms or workflows

Step 2

Create electronic versions of forms

Step 3

Capture patient identification directly from HIS

Step 4

Create workflow script

Step 5

Produce forms printed on-demand with pre-populated:
a. patient information
b. routing rules

Step 6

Realize immediate savings

Step 1: Workflow Design to Streamline

Omtool's ADT eForms production system (an eForms package for Admitting & Registration) was selected to eliminate preprinted multi-part forms and replace them with laser documents. These electronic documents were designed to incorporate patient identification from SNMH's MEDITECH HIS and create a digital ID based on bar coding of account number, medical record number and document type. Workflow "scripts" were created to automatically generate the appropriate forms according to unique patient type and/or department specific requirements. The ADT eForms production system eliminated the need for preprinted forms and provided an option to further streamline workflow through automatic notification via fax/e-mail to internal departments, physicians and payers.

In the registration area, Omtool's Image-In™ Point of Service image capture system was installed to prompt the registrar to collect patient-related documents previously copied. Again, workflow was automatically determined by unique patient type, insurance and/or other department specific requirements. Desktop scanners and signature tablets are used to capture information in a digital format. This point-of-service application allows images to be immediately available for viewing by authorized users in the business office and throughout the SNMH organization. The result is a streamlined workflow that produces both efficiency and significant cost savings.

Savings: Nearly \$250,000 Every Year

Mr. Freitas describes the financial impact the Image-In Point of Service and ADT eForms technologies had on his operations: **"When we began with Omtool in 2002, we were spending \$197,000 a year just on pre-printed forms. Within the first year we had that cost down to \$97,000 and by the end of 2005 it will be \$33,000. This is an annual savings of \$165,000.**

This was just the beginning of the savings that Omtool helped us accomplish;

Storage: As part of a central business office that serves six hospitals, we were the first site to go paperless. We were spending approximately \$7,000 per month on storage alone. Half of that was allocated to new files that needed to be inventoried and then interfiled among our closed files. The remaining \$3,500 per month is the fee to support our existing 7-10 years volume of closed files. **As of February 1st, 2003, we ceased sending any new files to our storage warehouse. This resulted in an immediate monthly savings of \$3,500 or \$42,000 annually.**

Patient Jackets: When Image-In Point of Service was implemented, **we also eliminated an additional \$36,000 annually that was being spent on patient jackets (file folders) and the associated expense of preprinting the outside of the jackets.**

Central Repository of Scanned and Imported Images

The challenge for SNMH and hospitals in general is accessing the required documentation to support the claim adjudication process, when it is typically stored in multiple onsite/offsite locations, in different computer applications and in a variety of formats. The inability to quickly and easily retrieve the necessary documentation creates delays that ultimately impact the cash flow cycle. SNMH found a solution to this problem in Omtool's Image-In™ Business document capture and archive system.

Mr. Freitas comments, "The Image-In Business system has given us centralized access to all of the information needed to effectively manage the claims process. The result is claims are paid more quickly, off-site storage costs were reduced or eliminated and customer issues are handled more efficiently." Supporting documents are captured and indexed using a variety of methods. Image-In Business accepts items scanned during registration; such as insurance cards and payer authorization, as well as documents received in the business office. Explanation of Benefits (EOB's) may be captured by scanning the hardcopy document or via an EDI transaction.

Mr. Freitas further elaborated, "Our initial investment in Omtool's point-of-service scanning product provided an efficient way for users to capture important documents during the registration process that would later be used to support claims management. The account life cycle begins with the registration process. Our goal was to scan all pertinent patient documents at the time of registration and allow viewing by authorized users later in the cycle."

While the electronic EOB provides a more efficient way for the hospital to handle cash posting, Image-In Business further enhances the claims management process by creating individual images for each transaction in the EDI file and automatically linking them to the appropriate patient. Immediate, on-line access to specific EOB information, by account number, makes processing much easier and improves overall productivity. SNMH is one of six Catholic Healthcare West hospitals served by a central business/billing office an hour away. Image-In Business not only transforms the electronic transaction into images, it also intelligently filters and creates those images from a data stream that contains EOB information for the multiple hospitals.

Image-In Business's Keylink feature automatically indexes scanned hardcopy EOB's, by directly linking cash posting transactions with each page of the paper EOB. This functionality maximizes searchable index data, while eliminating dependency on OCR. "We were dreading the idea of manually indexing paper-based EOB's from MediCal", Mr. Freitas explained. "Keylink automatically indexes our paper EOB's so we can retrieve the exact page on which a specific account number appears and locate transactions by dollar amount when needed. All of this happens without requiring scan operators to key enter this detail. It is automatic!"

The Report-to-Image or RTI feature allows reports and documents from other systems to be digitally stored as images within Image-In Business. RTI reads the digital document and associates searchable index values for quick and accurate retrieval. Mr. Freitas states, "Our system from Omtool satisfies all of the information needs of my business office operation. It automatically combines scanned information



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Omtool Solution

ADT eForms™

Annual savings of \$165,000 on pre-printed forms and \$42,000 in storage costs

Image-In™

Point of Service

Immediate savings of \$36,000 plus additional outside costs

Image-In™ Business

Decreased accounts receivable by 34%

collected at the point of admission, scanned and EDI generated EOB's, UB-92's and patient statements with images of the necessary administrative and clinical documents. We currently have the MEDITECH B/AR and ADM modules and the IBEX EDIS all feeding the Image-In Business repository and have gained fingertip access to all of the information required to satisfy customer inquiries, payer audits and other claims-based processes, all in one location."

Summary

- Sierra Nevada's A/R has decreased from 62 to 41 days (nearly 34%) since Omtool was installed.
- Sierra Nevada now has the lowest A/R days in all of the 45 Catholic Healthcare West hospitals.
- Sierra Nevada was recently selected as one of the Top 100 Hospitals in America for clinical / financial accomplishments.

Source: Modern Healthcare 2/28/05

Omtool Healthcare Suite

- ADT eForms™ Production System
- eForms Station™ Electronic Forms Library
- Image-In™ Point of Service Image Capture System
- Image-In™ Business Document Capture and Archive System
- Image-In™ Clinical Back Office Scanning
- Image-In™ Queue Document Processing
- AccuRoute® Document Handling Platform
- ObjectArchive™ Electronic Archive

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