

CASE STUDY

LAUGHLIN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL E-FORMS MANAGEMENT DELIVERS CLINICAL EFFICIENCY



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Quick Facts

Location: Greeneville, Tennessee

Focus: Full service hospital, with cardiopulmonary and radiology specialties

Areas using Access products: Patient registration, clinical floors

Products in use: Patient Flow System, e-Forms Repository

Integration: Meditech Client Server

Located in Greeneville, Tennessee, Laughlin Memorial Hospital is a full service facility that is committed to providing top-quality care. In 2006, Laughlin Memorial opened the first cardiac catheterization laboratory in Greene County. This new department allows cardiologists to conduct diagnostic procedures to assess blood flow through coronary arteries and check the hearts functions.

New radiology services introduced at new Center for Outpatient Care in 2006 included a 64-slice CT scanning suite, which was one of only three nationwide to feature special video imagery and sound that help patients relax during procedures. Other new services include Tennessee’s first “high field” Open MRI.

In keeping with Laughlin Memorial’s reputation as a technology leader, administrators at the hospital realized several years ago that managing paper forms created numerous barriers to efficiency. These included the high cost of purchasing, storing and disposing pre-printed forms, the productivity lost on manually preparing forms and delayed processes in the admissions department and on clinical floors.

Laughlin Memorial selected an electronic forms management system that administrators hoped would overcome these problems. Unfortunately, the product had insufficient functionality, was not well supported and could not be implemented in the ways that the vendor had indicated were possible.

The Information Technologies (IT) team at Laughlin Memorial still believed that forms automation could help the facility eliminate the time, productivity and environmental costs associated with paper forms. They performed another market analysis, and selected Patient Flow System (PFS) from Access.

“The features of PFS and of supporting products such as e-Signature were exactly what we were looking for to complement our EMR and patient safety initiatives,” says Laughlin Memorial CIO Mary Crouch.

To ensure that Laughlin Memorial could finally begin benefitting from the time and cost savings of electronic forms management, Access’s project management and implementation teams worked together on a tailored plan.

“Access’s forms automation plan was well designed to meet our needs and our project manager was always available,” says Justin Ryans, senior applications analyst at Laughlin Memorial. “All I had to do was call or send an e-mail when I had a query and I’d get a fast response.”

Forms conversion was one facet of the e-forms project that particularly impressed Laughlin Memorial’s IT team.

“Access’s forms conversion was much faster and better organized than the previous forms





The Business Problems

Existing forms automation system is not well supported and does not have staff buy in

Patient registration process is time-consuming and forms can be overlooked

Physical limitations of forms delays information sharing

Nurses waste time printing forms one by one and affixing labels, and patient forms can be labeled incorrectly

The Solutions

Access's proven project methodology ensures nurses and registration clerks are up and running quickly with e-forms management

Ability to print forms packets on demand ensures fast, error-free registration

Patient information can be accessed instantly from anywhere in the hospital

Forms printed with one click with demographics and barcodes on them, eliminating manual tasks and enhancing patient safety

automation vendor," Ryans says. "This helped us convince end users that the transition would be successful."

Once Laughlin Memorial's IT team had worked through the preparation stages of the plan, all that was left was for Access consultants to deploy PFS.

"The implementation consultant from Access hit the goals we outlined and we finished ahead of schedule," Ryans says. "He was very professional and knowledgeable, and proved to be a great asset for this project."

Crouch was equally impressed with the deployment phase of the project.

"Access's PFS deployment is one of the smoothest implementations I've been a part of," she says. "I highly recommend Access's project management and implementation group."

Creating New Efficiency in Admissions

Before implementing PFS, Laughlin Memorial's admissions process was time-consuming for patients and staff members. When a patient came to the registration desk, a clerk manually retrieved forms based on the type of admission. Now, after registering the patient in the Meditech HIS, the clerk selects the registration type in the Access system and prints a forms packet with a single click.

"The manual admissions process was subject to human error, because the clerks were relying on memory to select the correct forms," Ryans says. "With Access's PFS, all the required forms print right away with barcodes and demographics already on them, which ensures consistency and patient safety."

PFS had an immediate impact on Laughlin Memorial's registration clerks.

"People in admissions tell me that this is the first time we've implemented a product that makes their lives easier, and PFS is a great complement to our Meditech Client Server system," Crouch says. "Instead of wasting time pulling forms, everything they need is available on demand, which increases efficiency and gives them more time with patients."

When Laughlin Memorial's HIS is down for scheduled maintenance, Access's e-Forms Repository (EFR) enables clerks to register patients electronically, instead of handwriting patient information on forms.

Another advantage of using e-forms instead of paper forms is that once patient information is in the system, it's immediately available throughout the facility.

"If a patient is registered in one department and then transferred to another, staff don't have to wait for forms to arrive because they can access them in EFR," Ryans says.

Simplifying Clinical Processes

Nurses on Laughlin Memorial's clinical floors used to rely on a database that contained hundreds of forms templates. For each patient encounter, they would then select and print forms one by one. They'd then affix sticky labels with patient information. Access's EFR has eliminated these cumbersome steps.

"With EFR, a nurse selects a patient and prints the appropriate forms with demographics and barcodes already on them," Crouch says. "This is a huge time saver, and it increases patient safety by eliminating the chance of human error."



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The return on investment (ROI) provided by a technology solution is impacted by user adoption. Laughlin Memorial found that its nursing staff took to EFR quickly.

“It took just 10 minutes to train each of our nurses how to use EFR, and they probably could’ve caught on without training because it’s so intuitive,” Crouch says. “Within the first day they were using PFS and EFR efficiently and now it’s a key part of their daily routines.”

When they first heard about the introduction of PFS and EFR, nurses at Laughlin Memorial were skeptical because of their bad experience with the previous forms management vendor. These doubts were soon erased.

“We spent five years trying to get our other forms automation tool to work, without success,” Crouch says. “The Access solution was our last chance to get nurses away from paper forms, and once they saw how much faster and easier it is, they soon bought into the project.”

Laughlin Memorial finds that the Access system is as easy to maintain as it is to use.

“PFS and EFR are very simple to manage,” Ryans says. “It’s simple to add new users and to train them how to use the products.”

Now that she has seen PFS and EFR in action, Crouch believes that choosing Access solutions was a sound business decision.

“It’s rare to find that a technology solution works exactly as advertised, but that’s what we’ve found with Access’s PFS,” Crouch says. “This helps us stay in good standing with the users because they’re seeing all the benefits that we promised them at the start of the project.”





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