

CASE STUDY

TOMBALL REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER REVOLUTIONIZING THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE



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Tomball Regional Medical Center provides exemplary, comprehensive health services for residents of North Houston, Texas and surrounding cities. This full-service 357-bed facility has special expertise in cardiovascular disease, cancer care, emergency services, digital diagnostic imaging, physical rehabilitation, sports medicine, and comprehensive wound and lymphedema care.

The cost of pre-printed forms, the need to standardize and barcode forms to complement a medical records scanning solution and a desire to move toward a paperless environment motivated administrators at Tomball Regional to find a forms automation suite. After performing a thorough market analysis, they selected Patient Flow System (PFS) from Access.

“The ability of Access’s PFS to work alongside our scanning system and to provide a certified e-signature solution made it stand out,” says Marlene Pezzia, information systems director/HIPAA compliance officer at Tomball Regional. “Access’s Evolution online forms solution was also a decisive factor.”

When using paper forms, a registrar in Tomball Regional’s admissions department got up from his or her desk to find forms for each patient’s registration packet. Once the patient was registered, the registrar then assembled a paper financial folder for distribution to other departments. PFS has simplified this previously labor-intensive procedure.

“With Access’s PFS as part of our registration process, we no longer have paper folders, so staff don’t have to get in and out of their chairs as much,” Pezzia says. “With signed consent to treat forms, we have our proper medical records documentation.”

As part of its electronic forms solution, Tomball Regional deployed Access’s e-Signature module, which enables clerks to obtain a secure, legally acceptable signature for each patient. The software supporting e-Signature ensures tamper-proof encryption and authenticity of digital signatures and their associated source documents. This helps protect patient privacy and supports Tomball Regional’s compliance with HIPAA and Joint Commission requirements.

“Access’s e-Signature product is easy for patients to use because of our dual monitor setup,” Pezzia says. “It has made a significant contribution to our effort to go paperless in the admissions department.”

A further benefit of introducing Access’s e-Signature and PFS in the registration process is a reduction in paper use, duplication and waste.

“Our registrars previously printed registration packets and made copies of the completed

Quick Facts

Location: Tomball, Texas

Focus: Full service hospital

Access products used: Patient Flow System, e-Forms Repository, Patient Labeling System, e-Signature, Evolution

Departments using Access solutions: Admissions, emergency department, PT registration, sports medicine center, cancer center and wound care center, outpatient diagnostic, heart center, Meditech Client Server and OP surgery center





The Business Problems

Paper based process delays admissions

Registrars must leave patients while they get paper forms

Manual forms processing increases paper use and waste

Physical limitations of paper forms make it impossible for all areas of the facility to access forms

The Solutions

e-Signature and PFS facilitate a rapid and paperless registration process for first time and returning patients

The ability to process registration packets at their desks enables registrars to reduce patients' anxiety

Switching to electronic forms reduces environmental impact

Staff members in any area can instantly retrieve the forms they need

forms for the patient, the business office and other departments," Pezzia says. "The Access solution has allowed us to eliminate this paper use, so it has helped reduce our environmental impact."

Revolutionizing the Patient Experience

As you've read, Access's PFS is improving the staff productivity at Tomball Regional. The positive impact of forms automation doesn't stop there – it also extends to the facility's patients. One such patient is Mary Udy, who has been receiving treatment at Tomball Regional for more than 10 years. We asked Udy to describe her experience with Access products in Tomball Regional's admissions department.

"Registration was so much quicker and easier with Access's e-Signature, because everything was right there on the screen and just required a quick electronic signature," Udy says. "I'm used to filling out a stack of forms and waiting at least 30 minutes when I go somewhere for treatment, but this time it took less than five minutes."

In addition to speeding registration and getting her to a physician more quickly, Udy told us that Access products enabled her registrar to stay with her throughout the admissions process.

"In most admissions departments the registrar has to get up to fetch forms and copy your cards, but at Tomball she did everything right at her desk," Udy says. "She didn't leave me and that made me feel more comfortable."

Tomball's use of the Access solution to verify patient identity on clinical floors also had a positive impact on Udy.

"When I was in my hospital room my nurse collected information right at my bed side, which was so much more convenient than what I'm used to at most facilities," she says.

Later in her visit, Udy needed to go to Tomball's testing area for CT scans and blood work. This clinic is in another building and has its own patient registration desk.

"When I went to the testing area I was expecting to be asked to complete and sign forms, but instead the registrar just asked me to confirm my insurance information," Udy says. "I think Access's technology is particularly useful for patients like me that have made repeat visits, because instead of filling in new forms each time the information is right there in the registrar's system."

Udy told us that she has always been satisfied with the care and service she has received at Tomball, and that the hospital's commitment to being a technology leader has been a key factor in each encounter there.

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A Hospital-Wide Forms Automation Solution

In addition to using Access’s PFS and e-Signature in the admissions department, Tomball Regional is using this advanced e-forms setup in the ER, outpatient diagnostic, heart center and OP surgery center.

“Ease of use is one of the main reasons the Access suite is effective in multiple departments,” Pezzia says.

The facility is also using PFS in conjunction with its scanning solution in PT registration, sports medicine center, cancer center and wound care center. Access’s Patient Labeling System outputs forms with barcodes affixed, eliminating the need for staff members at Tomball Regional to either affix barcoded labels or manually index forms to affiliate them with patient records in the HIS.

To further enhance its forms automation initiative, Tomball Regional is rolling out Access’s e-Forms Repository (EFR). Managing forms in the central EFR eliminates the problems caused by unauthorized, outdated and duplicate forms that are common with a paper-based system.

When a form is needed, the user accesses a computer terminal and selects a patient or patients. After selection, a list of form groups and their associated forms is displayed. The user then selects the desired forms, and clicks print. EFR automatically merges the patient data received from the HIS into the electronic forms.

“Pre-printing forms was costly and our forms were not available to everyone in the hospital,” Pezzia says. “EFR eliminates that cost and enables anyone in any department to retrieve the forms they need. It will also provide continuous forms access if our HIS has unexpected downtime.”

With a single keystroke, the staff member can then digitally distribute the completed form anywhere in the hospital via print, e-mail or fax, or directly port to the document management/imaging system.

In addition to using EFR, Tomball plans to deploy Access’s Evolution online forms and business process automation solution.





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