

CASE STUDY

YAKIMA VALLEY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL CUTTING COSTS AND POWERING PRODUCTIVITY



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Quick Facts

Name: Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital
Location: Yakima, Washington
Focus: Non-profit hospital
Patients served annually: 130,000
Integration: Siemens

Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital has been a pillar of its Washington community for nearly sixty years. Through its 225-bed flagship facility and multiple outpatient clinics and labs, the non-profit hospital serves more than 130,000 patients a year. A host of educational and philanthropic endeavors take Yakima’s health care expertise to many more throughout the region.

As Yakima transitioned to a new HIS and document imaging system, the hospital’s IS team saw a compelling opportunity to upgrade its forms management system. Through a combination of an outside forms vendor, an in-house print shop and various software programs, the hospital had been producing more than 1,000 forms each year with little control or consistency. Duplicate, outdated and unauthorized forms drove up storage, printing and supply costs and completing paper forms caused delays on clinical floors.

Nearly every process at Yakima was driven by paper forms. Staff at the registration desk and clinical areas used sticky labels to affix patient information to each pre-printed document. Packets of forms were assembled manually and hand-delivered across the hospital. In the HIM department, associates scanned forms into the document imaging system and manually entered index data.

Getting More Done

In 2006, Yakima upgraded its HIS to Siemens’s cutting-edge Soarian platform. To maximize the value of this new system, the IS team realized a forms automation system that could seamlessly integrate with Soarian was needed. While working with Siemens (an Access business partner) on the Soarian implementation, Yakima’s HIM team completed a demo of Access’s Patient Flow System (PFS). The impact on administrators was immediate.

“Our first priority was to find a way to make our forms machine-readable,” says Sharena Sanders, director of HIM and privacy officer. “But the Access demo sparked a lot of other ideas we could use to improve efficiency throughout the hospital.”

PFS replaces the bottlenecks caused by paper forms with new efficiencies. Users easily





The Business Problems

Patient registration and care are delayed by the manual completion of paper forms.

Lack of a standardized forms management tool means hundreds of outdated and unauthorized forms circulate.

Printing costs 17 cents per page due to the large number of complex forms being printed.

Staff struggle to share information between departments.

The Solutions

Rapid completion of electronic forms enables staff to deliver timely and informed care.

Single, secure electronic forms repository ensures all data on forms is current and forms are authorized.

Reduction of forms output cuts printing costs by 12 cents per page (from 17 cents to 5 cents).

Users across the hospital share forms information in real time via automated workflow.

design customized forms without the help of a print shop, and Yakima's entire forms library is stored electronically in a central repository. Hospital employees have instant access to the individual forms or packets they need, and patient data can be auto-populated on every form. Workers can route forms electronically throughout the hospital, enabling recipients to quickly retrieve time-sensitive information. On the back end, PFS interfaces with Yakima's document imaging system to index data automatically and relieve the burden of manual data entry.

"The elegance of the Access system is its simplicity," says Andy Franz, application analyst.

"It allows our people to do the same jobs they were doing before, but in far fewer steps."

After eliminating outdated, duplicate and unauthorized forms, the HIM team hired temporary workers to complete the task of converting the remaining paper forms to electronic versions. The group also implemented a hospital-wide forms approval process to control the creation of new forms.

The first items to be managed in PFS were face sheets, armbands and registration packets. Employees now enter patient information in the system just once, and it then automatically prints on every appropriate document. The productivity gains were immediate, as employees no longer waste time on manual, forms-related tasks. All forms are recognized by the document imaging system, so there is no redundant effort.

"From the moment we went live, 100 percent of the forms were read by the scanner," Sanders says. "That's a great improvement."

Processes that took several minutes with paper now take only seconds using the PFS. For example, instead of gathering various pre-printed forms to compile a registration packet, an employee simply creates it with all patient information already filled in. Next, the forms can be routed electronically to workstations, printers, or fax machines at nursing stations and physicians' offices, eliminating photocopying and physical delivery.

"The Access system has made forms management a breeze for our facility," Sanders says. "It's intuitive and easy to use, and it has saved us a lot of money."

Productivity gains are equally important after a patient encounter is over. Whether forms are imported directly from the Access system or scanned, all information is auto-indexed in the document management system, creating huge time savings for HIM staff.

Improving the Patient Experience

Building on early successes, Yakima extended the use of the Access solution to outpatient billing. Staff once processed a stack of paperwork each time a patient came in for a



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recurring visit and patients were inconvenienced with a different invoice for each encounter. Now, associates complete forms electronically, saving time by auto-populating frequently used information. PFS also helped Yakima consolidate billing information and issue a single monthly invoice for outpatient services.

Less than a year after implementing its customized Access system, Yakima is claiming victory over its paperwork problems. From the registration desk to clinical areas to HIM, employees are sold on the benefits their automated forms system provides.

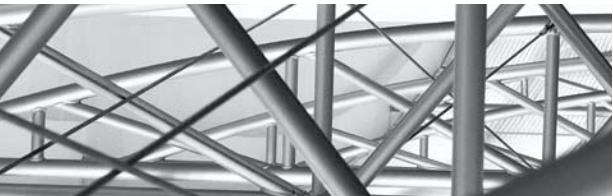
With a standard forms development tool and central electronic storage, Yakima’s forms library is more consistent and controllable. Forms are now concise and user-friendly, helping hospital staff to provide more complete and accurate information with every patient encounter. Ultimately, the improved quality of data aids physicians in making faster, more informed decisions.

By using electronic forms to replace printed versions, Yakima no longer relies on its print shop. The switch has dropped the hospital’s per page printing cost from 17 cents to 5 cents. Another benefit of managing forms electronically is that Yakima has reclaimed valuable storage space once used to house forms.

With the Access solution, nurses and doctors have the forms they need before the patient arrives, so there’s less waiting for everyone. With Yakima’s addition of multi-function devices on every floor, there’s no more trekking across the hospital to replenish a stock of pre-printed forms.

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