

Case Study



The Hospice of Florida Suncoast improves the quality of service with Fujitsu scanners

In 1977, the Hospice of the Florida Suncoast was born out of the vision of an exceptional group of people who realized the value of hospice care and wanted it for their families and neighbors. Today, the Hospice is the nation's largest not-for-profit, community-based provider of hospice and palliative care.

Business Needs

Located in Clearwater, FL with over 1,500 employees, their vision and mission still remains the cornerstone of their work and organizational soul: help each person in their community find quality of life. Toward that goal, they are constantly adding new programs, advancing hospice practices and spearheading internal technology implementations to meet the changing needs of their community. In fact in 1997, The Hospice began the development of a software product called Suncoast Solutions that serves as the electronic health record for Hospice patients. One in four hospice patients across the country receive care by a program using Suncoast Solutions.

The Hospice provides care for nearly 2,500 patients a day. Like all care providers, The Hospice is under tremendous pressure to increase efficiency and quality of service, while addressing increased regulations and combating the rising cost of operations. Though fully automated in their electronic record it was still evident in 2008 that paper was continuing to be an issue. The paper existed as portions of the clinical record that were not automated such as history and physicals from hospitals, home health aide notes, physician orders, as well as financial records and personnel files. Maintaining onsite and offsite filing centers not only took up valuable space but the process was tedious and expensive. The document management process was completely manual and involved the Hospice Medical Records, Human Resources and Finance staff to create, store and manage patient, financial and employee information, as well as manually updating the information via the Hospice computer system.

The Hospice faced several challenges related to paper-based processing within those business areas, including:

- ***Managing loose sheets in patient records***
- ***Onsite and offsite storage space constraints and costs***
- ***The need to improve storage and coding for patient documents***
- ***Scanning and capturing patient information during admission and offsite patient care***

Solution

Fujitsu Computer Products of America, Inc., introduced document-imaging scanners, the Fujitsu fi-5650C color duplex scanners, to help convert the existing paper-based filing systems of the three work areas into the new records management system. The implementation of 12 Fujitsu fi-5560C scanners helped to better manage documents and save on operation costs by scanning paper-based files into electronic format for easy accessibility and electronic filing. The Fujitsu fi-5650C scanners offered The Hospice the perfect balance of speed and versatility, scanning in color, grayscale or monochrome at fast double-sided speeds. The Hospice scans 5,500 single and double-sided documents on an average day, from patient medical records and employee human resource records to include advanced directives, signed medical orders, and transferred or copied paper medical records from other health-care providers.

“The use of the Fujitsu scanners, in conjunction with Hyland Software’s OnBase Document Management application, made the process of document storage and retrieval streamlined and efficient,” stated Gay Madden, Vice President of MIS, Hospice of the Florida Suncoast.

“Hospice caregivers spend most of their day in the field, seeing patients in homes, hospitals, hospice facilities and homeless shelters. With the addition of the scanning solution, and the integration of the document management system with the Suncoast Solutions clinical system, the clinician now has access to the patient’s entire medical record. This has enhanced The Hospice’s capability of providing the best care to their patients and families.”

The Hospice not only consolidated patients’ clinical charts but employee records as well; converting, storing, filing and securing employee W-4 forms, retirement plan enrollments, I-9 forms and other sensitive material that requires backup and digitized documentation. In addition the finance department is now scanning financial records to include Cash Applications and Receivables, Accounts Payable, Purchasing, freeing up valuable work and storage space.

Since installment, The Hospice is able to centrally store all patient and office records allowing them to share the materials instantly among hospice service center locations, complete each task in a timely fashion by eliminating lag time, and have ease of mind knowing the scanned documents are in a secure location and meeting compliance guidelines.

Benefits

“Our main focus at The Hospice has always been the care of patients and their families,” says Madden. “To provide optimal patient care and service, our team continually strives for innovation in technology. We were dedicated to the electronic medical record management deployment so we could reduce the physical space required to store the paper portion of medical records. The outcome has been phenomenal.” Madden adds, “When a patient is admitted, it took an average of 30 minutes to build the paper portion of the patient’s medical record. At this time, it’s averaging 6 minutes to scan and index a new patient record into the system, giving our Hospice caretakers more time with their patients.”

The Hospice expects the direct cost savings to begin in 2009 with the reduction in use of offsite storage and retrieval. The amount of storage space is beginning to decrease. It is anticipated that by January 2009, this savings in physical space will become clearly evident. Redundant filing at different office locations and file storage costs were eliminated as well, and all four service center locations have more office space to accommodate the care needs of patients.

Benefits At-A-Glance

- **Reduced paper processing eliminates lost or misfiled documents**
- **Immediate, simultaneous access to imaged documents**
- **Documented audit trails and security features**
- **Improved processing means shorter revenue cycle**
- **With up-to-date information about patients now at their fingertips, The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast staff is able to give patients seamless care anywhere**

Since the success of the initial deployment of patient medical and employee records, The Hospice is looking into future applications to include Contract Management and MIS internal forms and documents.

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