



Intelligent Data Capture: Cutting a health system's processing time significantly

Offering care at 3 hospitals and 27 neighborhood locations, one of the largest pediatric health systems in the country manages more than 1 million patient visits a year. Time is of the essence. If this health system is going to achieve its mission of providing 100% support for sick children and their families, it's crucial for its business operations to be efficient.

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*Senior Technology Manager
Leading Pediatric Health System*

A new Intelligent Data Capture solution from Quest Diagnostics that was implemented at the health system is helping its rehabilitation department be more efficient by reducing its order processing time, meaning kids can get back to being kids again sooner.

Before the health system started using Quantum Enterprise Content Solutions (formerly ChartMaxx), the award-winning enterprise document and data management technology by Quest Diagnostics, its rehabilitation department staff members were slowed down by a manual process that wasn't as efficient as they would have liked, especially when an order had multiple disciplines which required multiple appointments to be scheduled.

One rehabilitation department handles the scheduling for 12 rehabilitation locations and hundreds of physician locations, said one of the health system's technical applications advisors. And with the number of rehabilitation offices increasing, using a manual process to handle all the faxes and documents coming in from all these locations caused challenges.

Orders that came in with multiple disciplines, such as speech therapy and occupational therapy, required duplicate work for each scheduled appointment, and there was potential for lost orders or an incorrect directory could be accidentally deleted. Orders could be recovered, but that added time to the process.

The previous technology was more manual — it took a long time to refresh if there were many items, with the user having to click on refresh several times a day, taking 3 to 6 minutes each time.

Ensuring a seamless process

The team in the rehabilitation department at the pediatric health system wanted a more seamless process — some sort of technology that would grab the incoming documents from the fax or server, use optical character recognition to process them to determine what data to index and share, and then upload the documents into the system for processing or further action.

The health system reviewed multiple vendors, including Quest Diagnostics, with whom there was a pre-existing relationship. Quantum Enterprise Content Solutions was already in use in registration, patient financial services, human resources and health information management. Quest had designs that met the needs of the rehabilitation department, “but what really sold us was the flexibility and the ability of Quest personnel to be open to ideas and be able to code changes pretty quickly,” said the technical applications advisor.



For the rehabilitation department, Quest paired its Quantum Enterprise Content Solutions for document management and imaging with its Intelligent Data Capture feature, an optical character recognition process that automatically captures data and queues orders for users to make outbound calls to schedule patient visits. Orders are then sent and attached to the patient record within Quantum Enterprise Content Solutions and also made available within the EHR.

Quest's tailored solution for the rehabilitation department took just 12 weeks to implement. Quest's team was in constant communication with the pediatric health system's team. Key people helped with testing, and there were in-depth training manuals and quick-tip sheets to make acclimation to the new process simple and easy.

One particular area the team paid attention to was the optical character recognition tool, he said. Recognizing free-form handwritten text was a challenge. "It is hard to get people to write neatly," he said, but a tweak to the tool — redesigning the intake form to use check boxes and add boxes around letter for name, address, phone, ICD10 codes — helped ensure there were fewer hiccups.

All in all, the new solution for the rehabilitation department is "pretty straightforward from a user perspective," he said, so the amount of training needed to get everyone up and running was minimal.



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Reaping the benefits

More than 6 months since the Quantum Enterprise Content Solutions went live, the rehabilitation department is reaping the benefits of the change. The scheduling process now only takes 10 to 15 minutes, he said.

And that’s not all. The automation has increased staff productivity, reduced costs and improved performance, and is more reliable. Orders are more quickly available and are easier to locate, and because there’s less human intervention, they are not as likely to get lost. Additionally, it gives staff a greater ability to capture more data. The department is now capturing a wealth of new information into a new Database Table Schema. This information will be very useful for future reporting.

With the success of Quantum Enterprise Content Solutions for the rehabilitation department, the pediatric health system is considering which other departments would benefit from this solution. It is already looking at a second implementation phase that will offer reporting tools to the staff so they can learn, for example, how many speech therapy appointments were scheduled in a given month.

“Enterprise Content Solutions, with its Intelligent Data Capture, helps improve workflow across the health system by providing seamless access to data,” he said. “It supports connectivity and automation with the EMR, for single, inclusive, universal access to data and documents stored within our environment. We were pleased that Quest could help us meet our goals for reducing order processing time.”



About Quest Diagnostics:

Enterprise Content Solutions (formerly ChartMaxx) is part of the Quantum technology portfolio from Quest Diagnostics. Quantum Enterprise Content Solutions empowers healthcare organizations to leverage the information needed to help support and improve patient care, drive operational efficiencies, and lower costs. Users achieve 24/7 concurrent access to structured and unstructured content, whether it be the complete legal health record or business records, organized to reflect targeted and proactive data. Enterprise Content Solutions, with its Business Process Management, helps improve workflow across the enterprise and provide seamless access to data from clinical, Health Information Management, Patient Financial Services, supplies and materials management, vendor and payer contract management, Human Resources, and more.

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