

EFFICIENT IMAGE HANDLING ACROSS DEPARTMENTS BORDERS

Although medical images are used in numerous medical specialities, they are often not stored and distributed in a way that is efficient for the healthcare enterprise. For Sörmland County Council, this was an obvious problem, and the Council looked a long time for a safe and efficient solution that would securely store and distribute images from all departments with proper authorization and access control.

High expectations

When Sörmland County Council decided to implement Sectra PACS at its radiology departments, it was with the vision to subsequently establish the system as a structured image handling solution whereby all medical images from all departments would be stored in PACS. This would provide staff with immediate access to the patients' full image history without having to search through different archives. By exchanging image-based information efficiently, enterprise-wide collaboration and workflows covering the entire healthcare chain would be obtained.

Ease of use in focus

Sörmland saw the perfect solution in Sectra's Image Central – an application designed with particular consideration given to ease of use. Sectra Image Central ensures that all relevant images are accessible when needed, regardless of format or where in the enterprise they were generated. The application can easily be launched from a HIS or EPR system, and automatically displays the images available for the chosen patient. It also allows authorized users to conveniently add additional images to the patient's folder. This way the user does not need to log in to several systems or search for images, which will ultimately lead to improved, more effective patient care.

Full advantage of the PACS investment

Sectra Image Central uses the existing PACS infrastructure when it is deployed, and thus would allow Sörmland

County Council to leverage the investments already made in Sectra PACS. Another major advantage was that it could benefit from the existing integration with EPR.

“The fast and easy deployment was a huge benefit of this system, and it was completed well within the time frames set up at the outset of the project. It is also a major advantage that all administration is carried out centrally. This is extremely important for a system that is used throughout the hospital enterprise,” commented Ante Grubbström, CIO at Sörmland County Council.

Smooth implementation

In August 2009, Image Central was launched at the departments of Surgery, Emergency, Orthopedics and Medicine, which served as pilot clinics for the project. Three training events were held in a cinema setting (one for each hospital within the county). In addition, a quick guide was provided

Quick facts, Sörmland County Council

Sectra RIS/PACS since: 2004 (RIS in place a few years earlier)

Healthcare provider for: 265,000 people

Sörmland County Council includes:

- Mälarsjukhuset Hospital in Eskilstuna
- Kullbergsska Hospital in Katrineholm
- Nyköping Hospital
- Karsudden Regional Hospital
- 20 primary care centers

Radiology examinations: 200,000 per annum

Physicians: 737

Employees: 7,487

SECTRA

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Ante Grubbström, CIO, Sörmland County Council

to support users who could not attend the training session. Ante Grubbström stated, “Sectra Image Central is very intuitive and easy to use, and we only needed a single training session with a large screen to get people up and running.”

One of the users at the Emergency unit who could not take part in the training commented, “Although I had never used the system before, I could benefit from it straight away. I just looked through the quick guide and it worked smoothly.”

Immediate benefits

In an evaluation survey issued shortly after going live with Sectra Image Central, users’ early impressions of the system were collected. One of the features that received the most positive feedback was the flexibility of the system, and the possibility to access it from any computer on the hospital network. Many of the users who had previously used other systems for non-DICOM image management commented that Image Central had a positive impact on their workflow, and that it was fast and secure. A user from the Orthopedic department stated, “Start-up is quick, fetching images is easy and we can save images directly after capture without having to add any information manually. This enhances patient safety.”

Another user from the same department stated that there were notable improvements in the import procedure:

“When importing, we can now easily mark several images and move them to Image Central at once, which is a lot easier than our previous system. We can also see that the

images are uploaded straight away, and thus delete them immediately from the memory card of the camera. We notice a considerable advantage in images being instantly stored in PACS as it results in improved patient safety.”

Saving time and money

After evaluating the pilot departments, Sörmland County Council decided to deploy Sectra Image Central throughout the county.

“Extending Image Central to all healthcare units means that we will be able to replace custom-made solutions that are in use at some departments, which will lead to cost savings. But above all, Sectra Image Central provides a good standard tool for all medical operations that wish to use clinical images,” says Ante Grubbström.

Sörmland County Council expects to be able to provide patients with quicker answers, and to avoid patient transports and recalls, since images easily can be shared across the county between general practitioners and specialists to achieve quick decisions.

“I expect considerable interest, particularly from primary care, since images make valuable contributions when consulting specialists or other colleagues,” says Ante Grubbström. “We really appreciate that Image Central makes it so easy to share information based on images. We save time and can provide better care since we have our patients’ full medical overview including all images at hand,” he concludes.

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