

Wyckoff Heights Medical Center

Enhanced records management improves patient care

CLIENT: Wyckoff Heights Medical Center.

BUSINESS: Voluntary not-for-profit teaching hospital.

CHALLENGE: To enhance patient care by providing quick and easy access to medical records.

Wyckoff Heights Medical Center, a 350-bed teaching hospital located in an ethnically diverse New York City neighbourhood, has been providing medical care to the community since 1889. The hospital treats over 75,000 Emergency Department (ED) patients annually, and has a staff of almost 2,000 doctors, nurses and support personnel.

The hospital sought to implement a full-service records management solution, including scanning and image hosting, in order to reduce retrieval time for ED records, increase patient throughput, improve staff satisfaction and control access to patient information. Wyckoff turned to Iron Mountain for its simple, proven solutions. Iron Mountain's Document Conversion Service was used for backfile and day-forward document scanning, and the Digital Record Center™ for images to host scanned images securely.



THE CHALLENGE

A high patient workload and limited on-site file room space. Patient care comes first at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center; but with a constant stream of patients and limited on-site file room space, secure storage and rapid access to patient records was difficult. Before implementing Iron Mountain's solutions, manual records management processes and lengthy retrieval times often delayed patient care in the ED.

Additionally, records retrieval took a disproportionate amount of the hospital staff's time. Following standard practice for ED records, patient files were organised in alphabetical order by date of visit. No automated search facility was available if a patient couldn't remember the date of his or her last visit. If a record wasn't found immediately, the request was passed to management for resolution, adding to labour costs. This arduous records retrieval process lowered staff morale and increased the wait time for ED patients. Wyckoff Heights Medical Center knew decreasing the complexity and cost around the record retrieval process would improve processes for both patients and care providers. After evaluating a number of strategic options with guidance from Judy DelPozzo, an experienced healthcare consultant and interim Director of Health Information Management, they decided to scan and store their ED records using Iron Mountain's Document Conversion Service and Digital Record Center.

Iron Mountain is a sure bet for quality improvement. Not only is it easier to access scanned patient records stored with Iron Mountain, but we've dramatically reduced patient wait time in the Emergency Department.

– Cliff Miller, Vice President of the Emergency Services Department, Wyckoff Heights Medical Center.

THE SOLUTION

An overhaul of Emergency Department files with Iron Mountain's Document Conversion Service and the Digital Record Center for images.

Wyckoff Heights Medical Center chose a no-hassle document scanning and medical image storage program that did not require a large capital investment. Iron Mountain was specified because of its stellar industry reputation for records

management, and its expertise in bringing cost-effective, custom solutions to its healthcare customers.

“Wyckoff needed an expert with a full-service solution, and the team supported Iron Mountain completely because we knew they would help us achieve our goal of delivering better patient care at a lower cost,” said DelPozzo. “In all my years of experience, I’ve never been disappointed by Iron Mountain. They truly are a visionary in terms of the future of medical records management.”

With Iron Mountain’s Document Conversion Service, the hospital immediately began scanning a nine-month backlog of ED records. After Wyckoff overhauled their paper charts, Iron Mountain’s experienced team began scanning and uploading the records to the Digital Record Center.

The Digital Record Center for Images is a hosted service that provides Wyckoff with quick and easy 24/7 access to its ED records. Staff members can access records electronically, rather than pulling the physical patient files, and the quality of the scanned records is on a par with the physical record. Training the staff on the new system took less than a day.

THE RESULTS:

Timely access to records improves patient care – and cuts costs. “Iron Mountain is a sure bet for quality improvement,” said Cliff Miller, Vice President of the Emergency Services Department, Wyckoff Heights Medical Center. “Not only is it easier to access scanned patient records stored with Iron Mountain, but we’ve dramatically reduced patient wait time, which means they are in and out faster and we’re improving the productivity of our staff.”

Wyckoff Heights Medical Center revolutionised its ED files with Iron Mountain’s proven solutions for records management. The system has reduced records retrieval time, improved security and increased staff satisfaction, all leading to the hospital’s ultimate goal of better patient care.

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

Faster retrieval times. Rather than manually pulling patient charts, a process which could take hours, Wyckoff’s staff can now locate the electronic patient records in seconds. Patient records can be rapidly retrieved for continuity of care, litigation requests, billing and audit purposes. According to Miller, complaints about retrieval times have been dramatically reduced among both care providers and patients.

Improved space utilisation. Areas that previously housed ED records have now been deployed for other uses, and the limited on-site file room space is being used more efficiently.

Enhanced security. Login and password controls allow Wyckoff to restrict record access to key users. In addition, the Digital Record Center allows users to retrieve and print only the image necessary for treatment, rather than multiple pages of records and release forms.

Faster billing. Turnaround time for billing and reimbursement is faster now that patient files are available electronically. And because charts are not outstanding, collection rates have also improved.

Increased employee satisfaction. Hospital employees can now dedicate more time to patient care, rather than hunting for records. Records Management personnel also have more opportunities to learn new skills, thus improving cross training and career planning.

“The results are so incredible that several departments across the hospital want to implement a digital records system,” said DelPozzo. “Efficient records management is a challenge all hospitals face, and I would immediately recommend Iron Mountain because they offer a simple solution delivered by experienced professionals.”



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