

CHOOSING SUCCESS

aycan xray-print provides a high-quality image distribution option that saves money from day one.



BACKGROUND

From modest beginnings in 1908, AnMed Health grew from a small hospital into one of South Carolina's most comprehensive healthcare delivery systems. Today AnMed Health is a not-for-profit organization with 3,500 employees who deliver medical services at more than 30 patient-care sites. The Radiology Department in the 500+ bed AnMed Health Medical Center does about 13,000 exams every month.



While the AnMed Center is a complete PACS site and doesn't print film for its own reviewing physicians, supplying images to other facilities continues to be a key requirement.

CHALLENGE

Even after AnMed implemented a total PACS solution, media costs remained a significant item in the radiology department's budget.

"We do real-time radiology at AnMed," says Tim Catoe, PACS manager for AnMed Health. "But many facilities, large and small, are not as far along as we are when it comes to electronic imaging. The whole world hasn't gone digital yet. That means we have to supply prints for our patients at healthcare institutions and doctor's offices from Atlanta to Texas to, well, all over the country."

Naturally, doctors everywhere demand high-quality radiological images, and those images have to be big to be useful. At AnMed, that meant continuing to print a significant percentage of its radiological images on large format film.

In addition, Catoe explains that "today's CT scanners, for example, can produce a tremendous number of separate "slices" in the course of an examination, and each image of each slice has to be seen clearly by reviewing doctors to help them render a diagnosis." AnMed soon realized that new technologies had the potential to use more film than ever.

Mark Albert, systems support manager at AnMed, brings up another issue that AnMed was having with film: storage space. "We asked hospitals and doctors to return the films we sent them so we could file them for future reference," says Albert. "But real estate in a hospital is just like oceanfront property. It's hard to find and expensive if you do find it. We were spending a lot on film storage because of the space required, and also because of the labor costs involved in accurately filing each sheet."

Even with PACS, AnMed prints anywhere from 5% to 20% of the 13,000+ radiology images produced each month. A sheet of film, with processing, costs about \$1.05. Add in two-way shipping, plus storage and filing

costs, and it's obvious that printing films was an expensive proposition for AnMed's radiology department.

SOLUTION

AnMed had experimented with a paper printing system from another vendor, but that solution could only print 8-1/2" x 11" sheets. As Tim Catoe says, "You really can't send a complete chest x-ray to a doctor on a letter-sized piece of paper."

Catoe found out about the aycan print solution from a PACS administrator at another hospital. "To print all the images we need, we had to have the option of choosing from multiple media sizes," he says. "The aycan solution uses DICOM conversion software to provide that option."

"I approached aycan and spent some time looking at their solution", Catoe continues. "Of course, whatever we did, we didn't want to reinvent the wheel. But in aycan we found a vendor who understood exactly what we wanted. They know how to print superior radiological images on paper and how to implement the solution to fit the requirements of each customer. In other words, they do it right."

"With its low cost of operation and zero problems, aycan is doing a great job for us."

Tim Catoe, PACS Manager, AnMed Health

AnMed lined up all the people who are involved in the imaging workflow process at their Main Campus. They made sure that every device and modality could connect properly to the destination printer. aycan sent an engineer to help optimize all the settings. "It was great," says Catoe. "Within two days we were up and running with no hiccups. Within two weeks we were printing nothing but paper."

RESULTS

Mark Albert says, "We're spending about four or five cents per paper print, compared to over a dollar per sheet when we print film. Using the old film-based system, our film costs for the past couple of months would have been about \$5,000. Instead they were closer to \$200."

In addition to the cost savings, doctors and other staff members are very pleased with the high quality of the images and the speed with which they can be produced – so pleased that AnMed installed a second aycan solution at its North Campus. Images can be created at one campus and printed at another.

Catoe points out that the aycan solution is a powerful medical imaging solution, and it also adds value as a public relations and marketing tool for reaching physicians outside AnMed as well as the wider community. "Because of costs, we used to have to think about every single sheet of film we printed. Now if a physician needs several images to keep for reference in a patient's folder, or a series of prints for a presentation, we can provide them without having a big impact on our bottom line."

Tim Catoe has some general advice for managers of healthcare imaging facilities: "As a PACS hospital, we try to do everything digitally. But the aycan printing solution provides a superior option for everyone outside our market who needs hard copy images. With its low cost of operation and zero problems, aycan is doing a great job for us."

aycan's xray-print solution prints radiological and other medical images on plain paper at near film quality. It fits seamlessly into both traditional and PACS workflows, integrating with hospital databases using the DICOM 3.0 standard. Images can be received from any modality and printed on a certified aycan printer. The aycan xray-print solution makes it possible to share very high quality images while reducing film costs by up to 90%.

For more information on the aycan solution, visit www.xray-print.com or contact us at info@aycan-medical-systems.com.

aycan is a leading provider of plain paper imaging solutions for radiology.

