



Customer Success Story | Acuo by Hyland

CHRISTUS Health

A non-proprietary VNA helps CHRISTUS streamline patient image aggregation and access across multiple facilities.

CHRISTUS needed to standardize image access across eight regional PACS systems in use within their enterprise. CHRISTUS chose the Vendor Neutral Archive (VNA) because it is a truly neutral solution without proprietary ties to a picture archiving and communications system (PACS). With this solution, CHRISTUS clinicians and staff are now able to pull up all of a patient's clinical content without accessing separate locations.

Challenge

Difficulties of uniting eight PACS systems

Medical imagery is the largest component of clinical content managed by CHRISTUS. "We needed to make this information readily available to clinicians while also managing it within a long-term storage solution outside the PACS that serve radiology and other areas," says Lynn Gibson, vice president and chief technology officer at CHRISTUS. Today, CHRISTUS has at least eight regional PACS systems in use within the enterprise. Though some of these systems are from the same vendor, setup is not consistent.

"Image tagging is different across regions," says Gibson. "This can make image sharing a challenge. We also perform reads differently across our regions, including use of off-site radiologists. No matter where a physician is located, however, we still need to provide the same level of efficient, reliable image access and diagnostic services."

Meeting big data & EHR meaningful use needs

With the growing volume and variety of patient information, CHRISTUS knows clinical content storage and management is going to become an even bigger issue in the future. The organization wanted to implement a content management platform that easily supports a universal viewer to make medical images and other content available beyond radiology to referring physicians, ER staff and other clinicians.



CUSTOMER

CHRISTUS Health

SIZE

30,000 employees

\$4.6 billion in assets

LOCATION

Irving, Texas

PRODUCTS IN USE:

Vendor Neutral Archive

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Meaningful use is another key driver of the CHRISTUS medical image management initiative. By tagging and managing images in a more consistent manner, CHRISTUS hopes to make delivery of unstructured content more complementary to core patient care systems including the EMR, computerized patient order management systems and a planned electronic master patient index (eMPI) application. “We believe a vendor neutral archive (VNA) provides key infrastructure and functionality to make all of those applications more effective and complete,” says Gibson.

Solution

Choosing a non-proprietary system

CHRISTUS looked at several image management vendors before selecting Acuo VNA by Hyland Healthcare. “We wanted a truly neutral solution,” says Gibson. “Many of the other vendors we reviewed had proprietary ties back to their own PACS,” says Gibson. “We believe the VNA is better able to cross boundaries between disparate systems based on the company’s history of migrating data in and out of so many different PACS and storage solutions. We wanted to have freedom in the future to implement any clinical system without having to worry about proprietary formatting of patient content.”

“Another important criteria for CHRISTUS had to do with VNA’s ability to handle other content types beyond DICOM,” says Gibson. “Support for XDS and other industry standards will allow us to manage unstructured patient content not just from radiology but other clinical departments as well. This gives us a more flexible platform for managing future growth of healthcare data and allows us to participate in health information exchanges (HIEs) and other initiatives.”

The impact of well-planned deployment

“The team at Hyland Healthcare was extremely professional and helpful during the VNA implementation,” says Gibson. “One of our biggest issues was engaging existing vendors. Hyland Healthcare aided us as an advocate in situations where other vendors were pushing back on our requests for help. The Hyland Healthcare team was able to challenge them when they claimed something could not be done because similar issues had been resolved at other institutions. We could not have done that.”

Results

Uniting patients’ medical image across locations

“Now that we are live on Acuo by Hyland, whenever an image goes into PACS, it is immediately fed into the VNA,” says Gibson. “We are now in the process of migrating historical archive data from the various PACS into the VNA. Overall, image abstraction and workflow today is much better,” said Gibson. “In the past, getting information into an archive was extremely manual and very tedious. The VNA has streamlined the lion’s share of this.”

“The VNA is the aggregation point where all medical images are brought together for a patient,” says Gibson. “A patient may have ten different medical images at three different CHRISTUS facilities, for example. Using the VNA, we’re able to pull up all of a patient’s clinical content without having to go to each separate location. The VNA provides standardization, intelligence and workflow to make all of this possible.”

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Benefits of a common clinical archive

“The process of implementing a common clinical archive, with better methods for identifying, retrieving and managing clinical content, has been a positive and unifying experience for CHRISTUS,” says Gibson. “For other organizations that are looking to implement a similar solution, especially those that have multiple locations and serve different regions of the country, I would recommend taking an extensive look at the way clinical content is being classified, tagged and stored today before you begin the work of standing up a new system.”

“The passion we see with Hyland Healthcare around the technology and the vision of where things are going is very exciting,” says Gibson. “I always enjoy working with companies that are not trying to solve everything—trying to be all things to all people—successful companies don’t do that. Hyland Healthcare has a strong vision and focus on the market sectors they compete in. Their partnership has been very valuable to our success.”

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