

DCH Regional Medical Center

Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Ending Reliance on Manual Information Delivery Methods

Based in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, DCH Regional Medical Center is a 583-bed hospital operating specialty units for pediatrics, orthopedics, cancer and cardiology, as well as the region's most advanced trauma center and intensive care units. The Phelps Outpatient Center at the hospital offers a comprehensive range of healthcare services.

Eager to use the Internet and end a long-time reliance on manual delivery and faxing for distributing information generated by the MEDITECH healthcare information system (HCIS), DCH Regional Medical Center sought a solution that would automatically send the MEDITECH data and reports over its network to target recipients.

"With MEDITECH, there are challenges with communicating and sharing data," states Kelly Wells, assistant director of IT, DCH Regional Medical Center. "Electronically-driven information is higher quality, provides greater flexibility and can be printed and stored. It's also faster and more reliable than faxing."

Speeding, Simplifying and Securing Data Distribution

When DCH Regional Medical Center explored the market, it found only one solution that could meet its goal and had familiarity with MEDITECH — Interbit Data's NetDelivery. The hospital was one of the first sites to implement NetDelivery when the software was first introduced as NetPrint in 2005.

"NetDelivery gives us the ability to push data through the Internet on-demand and deliver it faster and more reliably," states Wells. "It's simple and straightforward to use, and because Interbit Data is familiar with MEDITECH, they offered instructions for setting up the software that made the implementation very easy."

"With NetDelivery, we just start it up and it runs," adds Randy Carroll, IS team leader in development at DCH Regional Medical Center. "Most of our users get their data patched thru and printed, so we just send it to them and they retrieve it from their printer. We've never had anyone complain that they didn't get their report."

NetDelivery's Distribution Wizard interfaces with MEDITECH to capture reports and patients' electronic medical records (EMRs). Reports only need to run once before being distributed to multiple recipients, saving the hospital additional processing and time.

Reliable Delivery of Data

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Finding Novel Applications That Prove NetDelivery's Versatility

DCH Regional Medical Center originally purchased NetDelivery to address the document distribution needs of clinicians in its community, as well as internal customers, and to provide rapid distribution of reports to numerous users at one time. However, once the hospital started using the software, various users and departments discovered it offers multiple uses beyond distributing data from MEDITECH.

DCH Regional Medical Center uses NetDelivery to securely and accurately send data and reports from MEDITECH to a wide range of clinicians and others associated with the care of its patients: doctor's offices, nursing homes, the Veterans Administration hospital, state mental health agencies and billing companies. Over 80 locations altogether receive data and reports via NetDelivery, including any office or facility using the hospital's outpatient reference lab.

NetDelivery also distributes timesheets, direct deposit notices and other documents from the hospital's human resources department to its employees using the web portal built into the product.

"Comparable web-based portal products are very expensive, while NetDelivery supplies this as part of the standard product," notes Wells.

The HR department has taken full advantage of NetDelivery's capabilities and is continually finding new ways to use it, with future plans including W2 forms online. The hospital also plans to eventually use NetDelivery for delivering lab results to physicians' offices as ftp files so they can import them into their practice EMRs.

"The possibilities are almost limitless as far as what you can distribute with NetDelivery," comments Wells. "We've really just scratched the surface of what we can do."

"We're only limited by our imagination," adds Carroll.

Accelerating ROI via Time and Cost Savings from Expanded Use

Prior to implementing NetDelivery, DCH Regional Medical Center would either hand-deliver or courier reports to physicians' offices and others in its user community, but now the hospital saves all that time once consumed by manual distribution. As a result, the hospital increases efficiency and improves its effectiveness at delivering patient care.

In terms of costs, DCH Regional Medical Center currently saves \$40,000 per year in printing and mailing costs, which Wells points out, "easily paid for the product." The hospital expects to double that savings as it further reduces mailing of documents.

From a business standpoint, DCH Regional Medical Center has witnessed an increase in outpatient activity, specifically in its lab, as it now has the ability to send lab results to doctors as soon as they are ready. The hospital accelerated the return on its investment by saving multiple users and departments the time and costs of manually distributing and retrieving information.

Getting the Support They Need and More

DCH Regional Medical has also been thrilled with Interbit Data's support and assistance with implementing NetDelivery.

"We asked for some customization and they've been very responsive," comments Wells. "The company's cooperation to help us meet our goals has been almost unusual. In these times, it's rare to find a company so willing to work with us and help us without charging a lot more money."

Adds Carroll, "If someone asked me to do this engagement with Interbit Data all over again, I'd do it in a heartbeat."

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