

Radiology practice boosts productivity 36% with vRad® Enterprise ConnectSM



Because of its partnership with vRad, Eagle Imaging Partners has been able to:

- Manage a larger volume of orders while halving turnaround times
- Take on more business: one facility and three hospitals thus far
- Tie orders to the practice dictation system
- Read images on one workstation
- Immediately realize a return on investment of one full-time radiologist



VIRTUAL RADIOLOGIC®

Background

The eight radiologists of Eagle Imaging Partners provide radiology interpretations, interventional radiology procedures and clinical support to 20 hospitals, imaging centers and medical clinics in Oklahoma City and rural Oklahoma. Two of its largest clients are Duncan Regional Hospital and Tulsa-based Servant Medical Imaging, which has seven imaging centers.

The practice's mission is to provide the highest-quality radiology interpretations with the fastest turnaround times in the area — no small task given its geographically dispersed customer base and the disparate nature of the radiology information systems (RIS) and picture archiving and communication systems (PACS) of the facilities it serves.

Eagle had grown very quickly over its first 3 years of business, to 90,000 interpretations a year, but its growth was being stunted by the lack of technology to handle more facilities. In fact, Eagle regularly had to turn away business because of the time consumed by long-distance travel, reading films on multiple platforms and an inability to read for different facilities while onsite at other facilities.

In 2009, Eagle's co-founders, Chief Executive Officer Eric Slimmer and President Byron Christie, MD, realized that they needed better technology in order to grow.

Practice Challenge

Eagle's reading room was crowded with equipment, according to Slimmer. "Our reading room looked like Mission Control," he says. "We had five different view stations for each location we covered."

The practice needed a solution to unify multiple disparate worklists, image viewers and report-generation systems. Such a solution would allow the practice to deliver orders, studies and relevant patient history information to a distributed group of radiologists, regardless of referring physician or facility. The added flexibility would also make retention and attraction of radiologists that much easier.

vRad Solution

Eagle decided to integrate vRad Enterprise Connect technology as the centerpiece of their image-management and workflow platform. This is the same platform vRad uses to interpret more than 2.7 million studies a year.

Slimmer says he was impressed with vRad's ability to manage the integration from both a technical and a credentialing standpoint, with little direction from him. "vRad had an infrastructure that I felt comfortable with," Slimmer says. "I like the operations center support and the fact that vRad had done HL7-compliant integrations with 70 clients."

With vRad Enterprise Connect technology, which went live at Eagle's first facility in June 2009, Eagle is able to use vRad's innovative technology platform and virtual radiology services to expand its practice without adding staff or investing in additional infrastructure.

"With vRad, we've been able to handle 36% more volume with no extra staff and even lower turnaround times."

-Eric Slimmer, chief executive officer and co-founder of Eagle Imaging Partners

About Virtual Radiologic

Virtual Radiologic Corporation (vRad) is a national radiology practice working in partnership with local radiologists and hospitals to optimize radiology's pivotal role in patient care. vRad's more than 140 affiliated radiologists serve 1,170-plus facilities (nearly 20% of U.S. hospitals), reading 2.7 million studies annually. Delivering unparalleled access to subspecialty expertise, vRad contributes to improved quality of patient care. And with our next-generation technology, vRad enhances productivity, helping to lower the overall cost of care while expediting time to diagnosis and treatment. For more information, visit www.vrad.com.

Anytime, anywhere access

With vRad Enterprise Connect, studies can be routed to a specific radiologist on the basis of comprehensive business rules and the interpreted reports returned to the referring physician in minutes.

In addition, exams can be sent to vRad's network for access to 140 radiologists —including more than 105 subspecialists—for expert diagnosis. "With our new technology platform and our partnership with vRad, we now have the ability to bring subspecialized radiology to the medical community at large," Christie says. "This type of care traditionally has been limited to large metropolitan areas and academic medical centers. We're making a difference to our community."

A major value of vRad Enterprise Connect is that it provides a truly global, real-time picture of the enterprise to radiologists, practice administration and IT personnel. Regardless of location, they have access to their current work list, radiologist case assignments and which cases are being interpreted by their virtual radiology partner.

This flexibility gives Eagle's clients the benefit of having a radiologist onsite all day, and the radiologists have the benefit of being able to contribute to the enterprisewide workload during times of local inactivity. "Our radiologists can be productive all day long," Christie says. "I no longer have to worry about coverage gaps, and I can take on new business without hiring additional, difficult-to-find radiologists or investing in costly capital infrastructure."

One workstation for all clients

Reading exams for Eagle's large, diverse group of customers without access to a conventional RIS or PACS presented a challenge. "vRad's Enterprise Connect automatically generates an order as soon as the studies are sent to us," Christie says. "Without this feature, we would not be able to manage the volume of orders we receive or tie those orders to our dictation system."

Now, the radiologists go to one workstation to read for all their clients. When the radiologist selects an exam, the images are immediately available for viewing and interpretation, thanks to the caching of images during the order-generation process. The caching process eliminates radiologist downtime, waiting for images to become available.

What's more, turnaround times were cut in half. The effect on turnaround times varied by facility, Slimmer says, but at some facilities that had relied on transcriptionists, it saved as much as 24 hours.

A solution that quickly paid for itself

Eagle knew that integrating a Web-based solution would quickly pay for itself but did not know just how fast. With vRad Enterprise Connect, Eagle has been realizing a return on investment since day one. "With vRad, we've been able to handle 36% more volume with no extra staff and even lower turnaround times," Slimmer says. "Our efficiency picked up enough that I recouped a full radiologist's worth of productivity, but I really gained more than that because of vRad's technical operations support."

Best of all, Eagle Imaging can now expand — a priority for 2010. It recently added a facility in Texas and, in January, signed three more hospitals. "Now we're at a point where we could easily grow," Slimmer says. "Adding business is just a matter of a phone call to vRad's technical team to organize the integration."

vRad ranked No. 1 in 2008 and
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