

Client: Cardiology Associates

Industry: Medical & Healthcare

Electronic file tracking and workflow solution ensures HIPAA compliance

M-Files manages the complexities of requests and reports at cardiology practice

Richard Heap, IT coordinator at Cardiology Associates, PSC, provides a numeric illustration of the volume of paperwork that runs through the cardiology offices. Each day the northern Kentucky practice of seven cardiologists receives more than 75 fax requests for prescription refills, 80+ clinical test results from various labs and hospitals, and more than 90 voicemails from patients, referring physicians, and clinicians.

**CARDIOLOGY
ASSOCIATES, P.S.C.**

“We used to be flooded by paper, faxes, and phone call log books,” he says. “Each request required timely processing and we also needed to be able to verify that each task was completed.”

The fact that Cardiology’s 42-member staff was not always on the same schedule or in the same office complicated the situation. It was often hard to determine if others had already fulfilled a request. “Many of the items needed to be handled in sequence, by multiple people on varying schedules working in three different office locations.”



Handling a constant flow of communiqués was just one challenge, Heap says. Each interaction with a patient required extensive documentation. Each day the clinic might generate more than 50 diagnostic reports, 75+ dictations of office visits, and over 60 electronic clinical reports, while also receiving 40 documents detailing outside hospital consultations. Production and approval of reports consisted of many steps of workflow back and forth between doctors and staff.

“With the new HIPAA regulations, we needed a record of who processed what information and when. We had to have a correctly filed and retrievable copy of all documentation for all patients,” explains Heap. “The fact that we have over 100,000 patients of record -- 32,000 of whom are currently active -- demanded a comprehensive system that would enforce accuracy and accountability.”

The M-Files document management solution

Heap learned about M-Files software from an Internet search for document management products. The simple logic of M-Files document indexing gave Cardiology Associates enough flexibility to shape the system to meet all its needs. The clinic gained not only the automated record keeping required for HIPAA compliance, but also a practical everyday solution to make its office operations more fluid and accurate when it came to handling detailed documentation. Heap describes the most important capabilities offered by M-Files for the clinic:

Centralized content – The M-Files document vault consolidated all Windows-generated content in one central repository, solving Cardiology’s problem of dispersed office locations. The vault shows up in Windows Explorer as if it were a standard drive. All users can save and find files in this one drive, regardless of which workstation they use. All clinical documents, voicemail wave files, Health Level 7 (HL7)-standardized XML transaction files, as well as any faxes related to any patient, are now retrievable from a single query from anywhere in the network.

Simple tags for workflow – In M-Files, any Windows document can have embedded tags, descriptive keywords like patient name or insurance number. These tags index the document for later retrieval, and certain tags can also indicate the status of the document within its typical workflow: whether a task is completed, a document is awaiting approval, or other follow-up or action is required and by whom. To track phone or fax requests, employees can simply save a MS Word template of the message with the appropriate status tag. The same approach manages the iterative editing and approval process of transcriptions and reports.

History tracking -- M-Files retains all old versions of all Windows application documents, and logs each revision with user, time, and date.

Import and export – Heap reports it was simple to draw in legacy documents into M-Files and index it according to metadata key terms. Likewise, simple queries can isolate certain sets of document types for easy export.

Security – M-Files electronic document system also satisfied the strict security requirements that come with handling patient medical data, a primary element of HIPAA compliance. Cardiology Associates can limit access to confidential documents to only authorized users, and it can be done on a per document basis. M-Files also integrates directly with Microsoft Active Directory, so existing Windows users and groups can seamlessly and securely access the M-Files vault with their existing account credentials. Heap reports, “We have now integrated M-Files into so much of our everyday processes, I cannot imagine how we would be able to efficiently and accurately take care of our patients without M-Files.”

About Cardiology Associates, P.S.C.

Cardiology Associates, P.S.C. specializes in the diagnosis, management and treatment of cardiovascular disease. Its on-site diagnostic laboratory allows evaluations with EKGs, exercise treadmill testing, as well as vascular, echocardiography and myocardial perfusion imaging. Cardiology Associates' physicians are available at each of four Northern Kentucky hospitals 24 hours per day. For more information, please visit: www.nkyheart.com.