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Quick Facts

Location: Farmington, New Mexico

Integration: Cerner

Focus: Paperless eForms and clinical device and system integration

Departments: Registration, Emergency Department, ICU

Access solutions: Intelligent eForms, Electronic Signatures, Enterprise Integration, Process Automation

Located in the beautiful San Juan River Valley in northwest New Mexico, San Juan Regional Medical Center is a 194-bed, level III trauma center that includes state-of-the-art operating suites and 72 private patient rooms with fresh air balconies. As a nonprofit, community-owned hospital, San Juan Regional Medical Center serves the Four Corners area of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Utah. The SJRMC network includes an 18-bed rehabilitation hospital, San Juan Health Partners specialty clinics, heart center, outpatient rehabilitation care, outpatient diagnostic services, wound treatment center, AirCare emergency service, a free-standing cancer center, San Juan Regional Spine Center, and San Juan Regional Heart Center.

Doing What They Had To Do

As part of its goal to create a paperless hospital, San Juan Regional wanted to utilize electronic forms and electronic patient signatures. But the system it had been using was outdated, and the vendor failed to meet the requirements that CIO Sheri Rawlings outlined.

"We explored implementing eSignatures for three years, but our previous eForms vendor's price kept increasing," Rawlings said. "When I told them that if they couldn't give us a more reasonable price we'd switch vendors for eForms and eSignatures, they said, 'Do what you have to do.'"

So Rawlings turned to Access. One of the features that appealed to San Juan Regional was Access's intuitive eForms design tool, which empowers the hospital's team to update existing forms and design and publish new ones quickly.

"If we want to change our hospital logo, our old forms product required us to make this update on every single document," Rawlings said. "With Access's solution, we can just make the change once, and apply it to all our forms. It's a big time-saver."

A True Partnership

One of the most important factors in the success of San Juan Regional's eForms and eSignatures transition has been the strong relationship between hospital staff and Access's team.

Access.

Highlights

Replaced outdated eForms system with the latest paperless technology from Access

Added electronic patient signatures to further streamline the admissions process in registration and the ED

Integrated output from 30+ clinical systems and medical devices into the EHR without user intervention or generating paper

Helped ISO compliance by improving forms workflow and tracking

"As CIO, I don't typically rip out systems and replace them. I prefer to optimize what we have," Rawlings said. "But bringing in Access is a win for us because it allows us to upgrade our forms management technology, gives us the electronic patient signature functionality we need, and helps us get rid of paper hospitalwide. We got Access's eForms and eSignatures system for not a whole lot more than what the other vendor was going to charge us just for eSignatures. It made sense to change at that point."

In addition to planning deployment of electronic forms in clinical and administrative areas, Access is working closely with the hospital's IT team to create paper-free, forms-driven processes that meet strict ISO-compliance standards.

"Unlike our previous eForms vendor, Access always works hard to understand our goals and helps us achieve them," Rawlings said. "They've always come to us and said, 'What can we do to make it better?' For instance, as an ISO organization, we need to track our forms and approval cycle. That's not something that's built into the Access system, but they stepped up and asked, 'How can we help?' It's more of a partnership than a vendor-client relationship."

Integrating Clinical Device Output into the EHR

San Juan Regional is a long-time user of Access's clinical data bridge, which enables the facility to send output from more than 30 clinical systems and devices—including endoscopy, anesthesia and postprocedure reports, EKG traces and inpatient and outpatient notes—directly into EHRs. No manual effort or data entry is required.

Previously, San Juan Regional struggled to get output from all its medical devices and systems, which are spread throughout various floors and departments, into the EHR. There were only two possible solutions: 1) printing output, scanning and indexing it, or 2) paying for a costly interface for each feed into the EHR. That is until Access presented a third way. The company's enterprise integration solution captures output from San Juan Regional's different systems and devices, standardizes it and integrates it directly into the correct patient's electronic chart. There's no paper, no delays, no manual effort and no errors.

"Access's clinical data bridge has been the single most impactful solution in our organization, and we have many, many, many systems that are feeding into our EHR today," Rawlings said. "It has streamlined and automated our workflow, and I can't even tell you how many hours we've saved with that process."

By facilitating a significant reduction in paper use, the Access solution also is reducing San Juan Regional's carbon footprint and positively impacting the bottom line.

"In the ICU, they typically generate about 600 pages per stay," Rawlings said. "With the Access system, we're no longer having to print that off and scan it every time, so we're eliminating ream after ream of paper in the ICU alone. We average 48,000 visits in our ED every year, so there's a big paper savings there, too."

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Simplifying Patient Registration

This paper-saving is compounded by the Access eForms and eSignature solution that San Juan Regional uses in its registration department. The previous vendor's product allowed the hospital to print forms on demand, but the packet that was generated included all possible forms that any patient might have to complete and sign. In contrast, the Access system presents only those forms that are relevant to each patient, which they sign electronically. The solution then sends them automatically and electronically into the EHR. Registrars also can generate forms that are more usable for patients who have a first language other than English.

"The Access system allows us to identify a female patient, for example, and so it only presents the forms that are required for women, not for men," Rawlings said. "It's the same thing for Spanish, Navajo or English speakers. We've eliminated paper packets in registration, the ED and inpatient areas."

In addition to saving time for San Juan Regional's staff, the Access solution and the faster registration process it enables is having a positive impact on patient satisfaction.

"Feedback from patients has been very positive," Rawlings said. "We've worked hard to make sure the monitors that they view the forms on are big enough and that they understand what they're signing electronically. It's definitely a better experience than when they had to sign a stack of paper forms."

Looking ahead, San Juan Regional plans to extend the efficiencies of eForms and electronic signatures to back-office departments like HR and materials management.

"There's no reason for purchase requests, our PO process, or any other back-office workflow to be paper-based," Rawlings said. "We're confident that introducing the Access system to all these areas and more will help us get rid of interoffice mail and the paper chase."

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