

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

PACS

Winthrop-University Hospital Looks to the Cloud

By Aine Cryts

When Winthrop-University Hospital, Mineola, NY, was looking for a new PACS solution, Rick Perez, RT, CRA, administrative director of the department of radiology, wasn't considering a cloud-based solution.

But, back in 2008, Perez knew his radiology department's PACS system was coming toward "end of life" and that would mean a lot of hardware and software upgrades. So, he was faced with this question: Do we just upgrade the system or should we consider replacing it?

According to Perez, the deal breakers for Winthrop-University Hospital, which has an annual exam volume of 180,000, were critical test results, peer review for teaching files, and total integration of the software. What was extremely important to Perez was that his radiologists wouldn't have to sign off and sign on to different software solutions, which can have an impact on response time.



Enrico (Rick) Perez, BS, RT, CRA, Administrative Director of Winthrop-University Hospital's Department of Radiology.

In essence, Perez was looking for one solution from one vendor who would deal with any problems that came up.

With Carestream's Vue for Cloud-Based Services, Winthrop-University Hospital will have fully featured image review, storage, and distribution throughout the enterprise, including delivering advanced reading tools to on-site or remote radiologists, according to Carestream. This solution also includes cloud-based archiving of patient data and imaging studies.

"Carestream's cloud-based services provide technology obsolescence protection and can reduce costs by up to 30%. Health care facilities pay a per-study usage charge instead of investing in building, maintaining, and upgrading a large internal IT infrastructure," said Cristine Kao, Carestream's global marketing manager.

During the search for the right RIS/PACS solution for their facility, Perez ensured that he included the voices of many radiologists.

"During site visits, we had radiologists from different specialties look at Carestream's solution. We wanted our radiologists to have this experience on site so they could see the solution in action and work at the workstations and try them," he said.

His department's technologists are pretty adaptable, says Perez, who believes that the "future's going to be a lot easier" for this team's workflow, since technologists will have worklists devoted to patients, equipment, and modalities. He is excited about having everything in one system—instead of having separate RIS and PACS solutions from two different vendors.



Winthrop-University Hospital is implementing a cloud-based Carestream PACS because it offers affordable, predictable operating expenses that include ongoing technology refreshment.

After Perez and his team at Winthrop-University Hospital learned more about Carestream's Vue for Cloud-Based Services, they determined that there were some significant advantages to working with a much larger company—such as Carestream—which, because of its secure, HIPAA-compliant cloud-based solution, can take on the challenge of storing and archiving images and reports on behalf of Winthrop-University Hospital.

Because Carestream will be storing this data, Perez can look forward to reducing his operating budget over time. "With Carestream's solution, I know exactly what it's going to cost per study and can project my expenses going forward," said Perez.

Facing the challenge of achieving "meaningful use" has also been top of mind for Perez and his colleagues at Winthrop-University Hospital. "We needed to ensure that the data we receive through our RIS/PACS solution can feed details into the medical record," he said.

"The rubber will hit the road on day one—after we've done our job testing the system," said Perez, but he is confident because of the due diligence he and his colleagues performed during site visits where he was able to spend time with people who were happy with their Carestream Vue for Cloud-Based Services. Moreover, his hospital's radiologists were able to speak with their peers at other facilities and learn about their experience with Carestream's solution.

Perez looks forward to implementing cloud-based services by the second quarter of 2012.