

Unifying the Imaging Enterprise to Enhance Efficiency and Patient Care



Using Intelrad solutions, South Jersey Radiology Associates' 12 sites are able to operate as a single entity. In addition to a robust PACS which helps maintain 100% uptime, the group is equipped with powerful viewers that can handle all modalities and a referring physician's portal that facilitates access to patient images and reports. Efficiency is already escalating, and they have plans to drive it further.

About South Jersey Radiology Associates

For over 70 years, South Jersey Radiology Associates (SJRA) has provided high-quality medical imaging services to the southern part of New Jersey. Based on the east side of the Delaware River outside Philadelphia, the organization is made up of 12 outpatient facilities, with 50 radiologists covering all modalities. This includes nine dedicated women's imaging centers, which have been designated as Breast Imaging Centers of Excellence by the American College of Radiology.

Unifying the Imaging Enterprise

Knowing that the best in patient care requires the best technology, SJRA has been keen to adopt new technologies since its inception. A few years back, with their legacy PACS beginning to show its age, their team started to realize gaps in their workflow. In addition to the system having a negative impact on productivity, growth through a merger had resulted in the enterprise operating off two different PACS.

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CMIO, SJRA

Recognizing the value that a single, state-of-the-art platform would bring to the enterprise, SJRA began evaluating solutions. After narrowing their list to five PACS, SJRA had each system tested on-site by 20 radiologists. This allowed for each systems' general features and functionality (speed of image on screen, worklist, ease of use, etc.) and modality-specific capabilities to be compared alongside their system architecture, product development plans, support and cost.

Following the system evaluations, SJRA selected IntelPACS[®] to be deployed across their 12 sites. In doing so, they were able to truly operate as a unified enterprise with a single worklist for all their locations and faster case allocation. These two aspects of the system were instrumental to improving efficiency across the organization.

“Using IntelPACS allows us to read the same study volume using 8-10% fewer radiologists,” said Dr. David Miller, CMIO, SJRA. “It also allows us to have studies read at any of our locations, regardless of where a scan was performed. This allows subspecialty exams to be read quicker with all exams being read by subspecialty reading groups.”

A Powerful Viewer that Covers All Modalities

According to Dr. Miller, another source for improving efficiency has been IntelViewer™. Amongst his staff, the solution is well-regarded for its customization and ease of use, the latter of which played a key role in facilitating adoption amongst radiologists and referring physicians. SJRA are also fans of the viewer's various modules, which enable radiologists to conduct all their work in a single interface. “We like that everything can be done directly in the viewer,” said Dr. Miller. “For example, the critical results module allows us to better track patients, the teaching files make it easier to look up similar cases, and instant messaging tools are beneficial for consulting fellow radiologists.”

Integrated Breast Imaging & Tomosynthesis Module Saves Time and Money

One of the modules which has been highly beneficial to SJRA is Intelera's Breast Imaging™ module, which allows radiologists to read 2D mammography and 3D tomosynthesis studies directly in IntelViewer. From an operational standpoint, the module has proven to be more cost effective than maintaining dedicated breast imaging workstations while improving workflows and increasing productivity among SJRA's breast imaging specialists.

According to Dr. Sherrill Little, the module saves her one hour per day through rapid access to patient data and not having to flip through printed reports to find relevant information. These thoughts are echoed by her colleague, Dr. Renee Kendzierski.

“When we had a dedicated breast imaging workstation and a PACS, I used to spend a lot of my day going into the PACS to see what the ultrasound showed or what the report showed, because none of that is in the breast imaging workstation,” said Dr. Renee Kendzierski. “Having everything together is beautiful: I can look at the prior report immediately; I can look at the diagnostic to see what they evaluated previously: I can see biopsy images and pathology reports. That saves a lot of time.”

Improved Results Distribution

Through their IntelPACS deployment, SJRA has also been able to improve the results distribution using IntelConnect[®], Intelera's referring physician portal. Widely adopted among SJRA's customer base, the solution provides physicians with single-point access to a branded portal where they can quickly access patient images and reports. The solution also features an iOS app, which alerts physicians when a study is available.

For SJRA, IntelConnect is a key component to maintaining satisfaction amongst their referrer base. According to Dr. Miller, he's seeing user adoption continuing to grow amongst his referrers. “Every day, we have new physicians and practices signing up to use IntelConnect,” says Dr. Miller. “A few thousand have signed up to the system in the past year and are generally positive about the portal, happy to get the information they need quickly.”

Working Together to Continually Improve

Moving forward, SJRA plans to leverage Intelrad solutions to grow their study volume while maintaining the same sized staff. To increase efficiency further, the group is planning to deploy Intelrad's Assignment Engine™, which automatically distributes cases to the most appropriate radiologist. This is accomplished using pre-determined sets of real-time variables, such as a reader's availability, subspecialty, workload, location and more. For SJRA, the module will be used for distributing cases to the subspecialist most appropriate to interpret the case most expeditiously, for balancing caseloads, and eliminating the time spent manually distributing cases.

When asked if IntelePACS has met SJRA's expectations, Dr. Miller's response is a single word: "Definitely." He is also positive about his ongoing relationship with Intelrad staff.

"Our relationship with Intelrad feels like a partnership," said Dr. Miller. "Their staff is very professional and we feel well supported. They are very easy to talk to and be honest with, and they're honest in return – there's never any smoke and mirrors."

About Intelrad Medical Systems

Intelrad is a recognized leader in medical imaging PACS and workflow solutions. IntelePACS® relies on a scalable, flexible, and fault-tolerant architecture. Intelrad solutions, like InteleOne®, have a strong reputation for reliability and performance in complex, multi-site environments with challenging workflows.