Radiologie Varad Completes Final Chapter to Full Digitization
An IntelePACS Case Study

Radiologie Varad continues to offer leading-edge technology to referrers and patients after adopting their first PACS over a decade ago

Based in Montreal, Canada, Radiologie Varad is a full-service private radiology practice. It is owned and operated by a team of 14 radiologists affiliated with the University of Montreal Hospital Center (CHUM), a three-hospital healthcare teaching campus. After it was formed in 1965 to help handle the increasing demand for radiological services at St. Luc's Hospital, it grew rapidly – as did its reputation for medical excellence.

Towards a Digital Future

In April of 2000, the clinic relocated its office in the city's central business district. The group's leadership realized that to better serve their growing patient base, conversion to digital technology was a must. “We looked at what was being done in Europe, and in the United States, and we knew that it was going to be the future in terms of archiving, ease of collaboration, and fast transmission of data to better-serve patients,” said Dr. Benoît Aubin, President and practicing radiologist.

Varad began the process to seek out the best possible solution and sent out a request for proposals. Knowing that Intelerad was already working with the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) in Montreal, one of the most comprehensive university health centres in North America, Varad's leadership called upon their contacts at McGill and began discussions with Intelerad for their IntelePACS® solution.

An enterprise-level medical imaging solution that is highly scalable, IntelePACS combines secure communications and compression technology to enable users the freedom to report studies from any location.
Intelerad Offers a Superior Choice

NCH administrators decided to seek a superior PACS solution that would streamline their radiology workflow, better handle images and other data originating from other facilities, and address the myriad of other shortcomings exhibited by the first PACS system.

In evaluating replacement PACS candidates, NCH was able to easily articulate the technical requirements. These included better system response, less downtime, access to priors, support for hanging protocols, and overall ease of use.

The second time around, NCH was a more discriminating shopper. The radiologists were active participants in the evaluation process, recognizing the PACS system as a complex and integral part of their practice - critical to delivering a continuity of care to patients across the entire healthcare system.

The decision to go with IntelePACS cemented Varad’s position as one of Montreal’s leading practices in neuroradiology, musculoskeletal, thoracic, mammography, abdominal imaging and interventional radiology. “Converting to a digital environment with IntelePACS provided a big boost in productivity, allowing us to save about 50-60% of our time in reading cases,” said Dr. Aubin. “As early adopters it did cost us a little bit but it improved our productivity so much that we’ll never regret it.”

Two Systems Complement Each Other for Maximum ROI

In 2004, Varad moved ahead again with Intelerad – this time through implementation of a fully integrated RIS-PACS workflow with their digital modalities (MR, US, DR/CR, and FL). This was critical because it enabled the group to maximize patient throughput in one of the busiest healthcare service areas in the country. Thus, Varad was able to fully leverage DR technology and maximize its return on investment.

Seamless RIS-PACS integration is key to a successful and efficient workflow, and IntelePACS offered one of the most complete and seamless integrations on the market. From inception, Varad’s workflow benefited from the integration of their existing RIS with IntelePACS. IntelePACS handled diagnostic viewing, DICOM Modality Worklist, and archiving, while the RIS handled both reporting and transcription worklists in addition to billing and booking.

Moving Forward Again With Intelerad to Modernize Workflow

In 2009, Varad converted to a PACS-driven workflow in order to take advantage of Intelerad’s Reporting Worklist, InteleViewer™ and Intelerad Dictation. Intuitive and fully customizable, the Reporting Worklist enabled Varad to see patient history and prior reports, manage its signing worklist, collaborate with colleagues, and search for specific cases. “If we need to compare images to previous exams, the prior images appear right away, dating as far back as 2000, said Dr. Aubin. “It accelerates the process immensely and translates into yet another gain in productivity.”

Time Saved, Productivity Enhanced

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Breast Imaging Becomes the Focus

In 2010, Intelerad announced the release of the IntelePACS® Breast Imaging mammography module, developed in close collaboration with Intelerad customers to handle both diagnostic and breast screening program workflows. Varad, one of the customers that had expressed a need for this module, was also one of the first to put its features into practice.

With Intelerad’s Breast Imaging module, Varad enabled a more efficient mammography screening and diagnostic workflow. “Once the eye adapts to the transition from film to digital, the benefit of digital mammography is that it allows us to manipulate the image much better,” said Dr. Aubin. “We can zoom in on any section, adjust the contrast much more easily, and are able to better “navigate” through the breast and detect small subtleties because the image is better, crisper, and much more defined. If we see better and we diagnose better, it’s the patient who will benefit at the end of the day.”

Better Patient Care and Increased Productivity

In only a few months, more than 18,000 mammography studies have already been read at Varad with the new breast imaging module. With this final chapter in achieving a fully digitized environment, Varad has grown alongside Intelerad, able to use leading technology to increase efficiency, productivity and deliver the best patient care possible.