



eScription

Poudre Valley Health System Realizes the Rewards of Upgrading to Background Speech Recognition from eScription

Poudre Valley Health System (PVHS), located in the area of Fort Collins, Colorado, is a regional network of healthcare facilities that includes two hospitals, an outpatient clinic, and a behavioral health clinic. In 2004, it found itself relying on an outdated medical record management system and an archaic dictation process while anticipating an increase in transcription.

“The quality of our documentation system combined with horribly long turnaround times and \$15,000 in overtime pay every two weeks signaled that change was needed,” said Russ Branzell, Chief Information Officer at Poudre Valley Health System. “We needed a better transcription process that would improve the productivity of our medical transcriptionists (MTs) and reduce our costs.”

Speech Recognition: A Rewarding Change

When the medical records department at PVHS went live with the eScription platform for computer aided medical transcription (CAMT) in May 2006, the organization did not realize how rewarding this seemingly daunting change was going to be. “Our decision to implement eScription software on the same, exact day our transcription volume was predicted to double because of the opening of a new hospital took a great deal of trust,” stated Dianne Fessler, Transcription Manager at PVHS.

The technology at the heart of the eScription platform is CAMT, an approach proven to improve the productivity of MTs and thereby deliver significant cost savings to the healthcare organization. With CAMT, powerful background speech recognition technology converts the spoken word to written text from models developed solely from the medical transcription environment, and employs contextual information to create high quality first drafts. The software interprets and formats dictations in order to transcribe what a

Highlights

- Payback of initial investment realized within 7 months after implementation
- Saved close to \$1 million in one year
- MT productivity increased, enabling the HIM department to handle additional transcription volume and to eliminate the use of outsourced services
- Turnaround times significantly reduced—for Discharge Summaries and Operative Notes in particular



clinician intends to be in a document and not necessarily what he or she has said. For instance, when a clinician dictates “HPI,” he or she will likely mean “History of Present Illness.” The formatted documents are produced in the style set up and approved by each healthcare organization.

The eScripton client software makes the editing process as fast and efficient as possible with features such as shortcut keystrokes and audio speed controls. The MTs’ edits deliver important, automatic feedback that continuously enhances the speech recognition engine, enabling it to provide increasingly better drafts over time. A single administrative console helps supervisors manage the complete clinical documentation process.

Volume Increase Supported by Gains in MT Productivity

PVHS currently produces over 20 million lines of transcription per year, which represents an increase of 8 million lines since the new eScripton system went live. 95% of the dictation volume goes through the speech recognizer to produce first drafts for editing—and this yield continues to improve. Through editing instead of traditional transcription, the organization’s MTs are achieving productivity gains of 90% or more, enabling them to now handle all of the transcription volume in-house.

Million Dollar Cost Savings and 7-month ROI

According to Branzell, “With help from eScripton, our transcription department significantly increased its productivity, leading to substantial cost savings.” Within one year of changing to CAMT, the organization realized cost savings close to \$1

million, and it had a payback on its investment within seven months of implementation. Savings as of 2010 are more than \$3.8 million. Cost savings resulted from the organization’s ability to handle all work—including the significant volume increase—with its existing in-house staff, and to completely eliminate any need for outsourced services. In addition, overtime pay to MTs was reduced by \$400,000 or 86%—from a peak of 500 hours each month to 50 hours each month—because reports are completed faster and not piling up as they would before.

Smooth Implementation

One reason that the PVHS decision-making team chose the eScripton solution was that it integrated well with its organization’s existing technology platforms. They also valued that the impact to clinicians’ workflow would be minimal. “The implementation process was extremely smooth,” noted Branzell. “The knowledgeable eScripton project management team worked closely with our project manager to define up-front all the interface and formatting requirements and the necessary distribution rules.”

All 37 MTs at PVHS were trained on the eScripton transcription product prior to “go-live” to facilitate the transition to editing. With its Microsoft® Word-based interface, the product provides a familiar platform for the MTs. It also includes many features that help speed the editing process, such as adaptive playback speech, a patented technology. Additionally, document management and workflow have improved, as jobs are continuously assigned and moved quickly through the editing process.

“eScripton has been a lifesaver. Our improved turnaround time has assisted in timelier billing and excellent ratings in medical records documentation, reflected in our Malcolm Baldrige Award nomination.”

—Dianne Fessler
Transcription Manager

“With help from eScripton, our transcription department significantly increased its productivity, leading to substantial cost savings. Hearing praise for an IT decision from all participants in the transcription process, from clinicians to our medical records staff, and reaching our goals, provides a great sense of accomplishment.”

—Russ Branzell

CIO, Poudre Valley Health System

Quicker Turnaround Time and Faster Billing

Within a few months, PVHS noticed a marked improvement in the turnaround times for completed documents. “Our department benefited from a significant improvement,” noted Bonnie Barlow, Assistant Transcription Supervisor at PVHS. “Discharge Summaries were running on an average 22 day turnaround time pre-implementation; today, the average TAT is 10 hours. Similarly, Operative Notes are down to a 2.5 hour TAT from 37 hours.”

Another key result of CAMT: the turnaround time reductions have led to quicker billing and faster account receivables by the organization. Added Barlow, “Improvements are noticeable across the board, in every department that depends on medical documentation.”

Satisfied Clinicians

Prior to the implementation of CAMT, clinicians frequently complained about the quality of documentation they received. Now, superior document quality has eliminated lengthy telephone reviews in the coding process. “I have not heard one complaint about the quality or turnaround

Challenge: Poudre Valley Health System needed to upgrade its outdated medical record management system and dictation process to handle an anticipated increase to transcription volume.

Solution: PVHS executives elected to implement the eScripton on-demand platform for computer aided medical transcription (CAMT), a solution based on the premise that it’s faster to edit than to type. Rather than following a traditional transcription process, powerful background speech recognition software turns clinicians’ dictations into accurate, fully formatted draft documents that MTs quickly review and edit, often doubling productivity.

Results: Post-implementation, PVHS achieved a return on investment within seven months, saved nearly \$1 million in transcription costs in year one, and increased MT productivity, allowing the elimination of outsourced services. In addition, eScripton CAMT helped reduce document turnaround times, accelerating the billing and collection process for the hospital.

time since moving to the eScripton system,” said Branzell. “Further, there is no longer a risk of lost dictations because they are saved on eScripton secure servers.”

Commented Fessler, “eScripton has been a lifesaver. Our improved turnaround time has assisted in timelier billing and excellent ratings in medical records documentation, reflected in our Malcolm Baldrige Award nomination.”

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