Early diagnosis matters: Lung cancer screening saves lives.

Patients benefit from AI-streamlined radiology workflow

By Karen Holzberger
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Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths for both men and women in the United States, killing more than 150,000 people annually. Lung cancer accounts for even more deaths than breast, prostate and colon cancer combined, according to the American Cancer Society. An even more sobering statistic comes from the Lung Cancer Alliance: an estimated 1 in 15 Americans will be diagnosed with lung cancer at some point in their lives.

This month we acknowledge National Lung Cancer Awareness Month as well as the clinicians, patients and families affected by lung cancer. The message emerging from oncology experts in recent years is loud and clear: Early screening is the key to helping clinicians diagnose lung cancer early.

A strong lung cancer screening (LCS) program requires clinicians to capture more than 50 pieces of data per visit and monitor patients closely, including follow-up scans, each with many more data points to capture.

Starting with the first imaging event, patients benefit from a highly coordinated approach that involves frequent tracking, patient reminders and data capturing.

Screening awareness received a major boost in 2015 when CMS began to cover lung cancer screening protocols with low dose computed tomography, if certain eligibility requirements were met. Great strides in screening technology have been made since then, said Andrea McKee, MD, a radiation oncologist for Lahey Hospital and Medical Center, one of the industry's earliest partners in developing LCS tools.

Lahey has seen its Stage I diagnoses rise to 69% (compared to the national average of 25%) and has reduced the number of screened patients diagnosed with Stage IV from 35% to less than 10%. "This shift from late to early stages has tremendous implications for survival rate and patient care overall," said Dr. McKee.

Primordial Design, recently acquired by Nuance, pioneered the first lung cancer screening product in cooperation with partners like Lahey in 2014. We continue to innovate by integrating AI and voice recognition technology into the entire patient care cycle, while further streamlining the workflow, from patient enrollment all the way through to quality metric reporting.

Our goal is to deliver the most efficient and accurate tools for lung cancer screening, which will in turn give care providers the potential to reach more patients and to save more lives.

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