Nuance solutions automate patient workflows at Northwood Health Systems.

Improve patient care, streamline operations and support compliance requirements.

Cradled in the Ohio River Valley, Wheeling West Virginia is home to Northwood Health Systems, a leader in providing quality care for patients of all ages with emotional problems, intellectual disabilities, mental illness, and drug and alcohol addictions. Privately held, Northwood has more than 500 employees and serves 3,000 patients at more than 19 clinical and residential facilities located across three counties in northern West Virginia.
“Nuance solutions provided us with a true enterprise-class solution; we were able to easily and intelligently scale the solution to support our large volume at no additional cost to the operation. We’re happy to say—we loved the flexibility and ease with which Nuance AutoStore and the Nuance team was able to support our mission!”

Tom Dzmura, IT Director
Northwood Health Systems, Wheeling, WV
“The Nuance AutoStore integration with SharePoint works perfectly. We’ve built in a lot of monitoring to be able to identify what part of the process the document is currently in when we’re asked to track one, and whether submission is needed for documents that fail a component process and need to be dealt with separately.”

Tom Dzmura, IT Director
Northwood Health Systems, Wheeling, WV

“We’ve had SharePoint in use as our CORE medical records document imaging repository for about two years, but have now been able to build in some very nice user interfaces in SharePoint to permit easy search and retrieval of the medical records cataloged in the patient folders, and an export utility for Medical Records extraction and submission to other providers or legal entities,” Dzmura says.

The new system is not only secure, protecting all patient and administrative records, but also greatly increases collaboration among staff, critical in point-of-care situations where quick and secure access is needed.

With Nuance solutions' improved processing speed and accuracy, scanned clinical documents are part of the patient’s COMPLETE chart in minutes rather than hours.

Dzmura also points to the flexibility of the solution as a key factor. Particularly, when at one point in the project Northwood needed to process thousands of documents simultaneously they were able to leverage Nuance AutoStore’s multi-server architecture to load balance the work.

A document imaging 'server farm' allowed Northwood to send larger documents to the least busy of two large document OCR engines and small documents to the least busy of four small document OCR engines. This helped get the smaller, more numerous documents processed quickly while pushing the 200+ page jobs through a separate OCR pathway.

Benefits for patient care, administration and the compliance team.

With an integrated system for managing business, administrative and clinical records, operations have been streamlined and become more efficient which logically affects the level of patient care, as well as maintains Northwood’s position with regulatory compliance.

According to Dzmura, Northwood's top three IT goals are to leverage advanced technology to provide safe, efficient, cost effective healthcare; to create innovative solutions to deliver safe, quality care to increase the bottom line; and to eliminate tasks that are repetitive and error prone and replace them with technology solutions.

According to a member of Northwood’s Regulatory Compliance group, clinical charges in the EHR are audited constantly as they’re entered to ensure that there’s supporting documentation in place and that for every documented service, a corresponding EHR charge is in place. This happens automatically every hour. As a result, the clinical staff no longer has to wonder when their documents will come off the audit list because the cycle time from submission to patient record is so short—typically within minutes. Everything is tracked centrally so the document lifecycle is known from the time of submission to storage in SharePoint.

The near-real-time nature of the Nuance AutoStore/SharePoint Document Imaging Repository has revolutionized communication of patient data across the three counties in rural West Virginia that Northwood serves.
Having documents submitted at a location over an hour’s drive away being made available securely in minutes for review by all clinical staff as a part of the patient’s medical record has greatly increased collaboration and saved precious time. Because of that, therapists, PAs, CNPs, or case managers who submit documents at remote sites can have their clinical documentation available for review by senior psychology and medical staff almost instantly as part of the patient’s chart.

“Northwood prides itself on the high level of services and patient care we bring to our communities,” adds Dzmura. “With this advanced system, we are definitely supporting that mission at all levels.”

To learn more about Nuance Document Healthcare Solutions please call 1-800-327-0183 or visit nuance.com

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