

VA New England Healthcare System meets compliance with secure document capture and printing.

Challenge

- More than 8.3 million veterans seek services from over 53,000 licensed healthcare professionals associated with the VHA
- Find better ways to deliver healthcare, streamline the systems and adhere to regulatory mandates

Solution

- Consolidate the New England Healthcare System to better collaborate and take advantage of a regionally managed one-solution system managing patient records, administrative functions, human resources, billing and purchasing

Results

- Easily customized workflows
- Secure print capabilities from desktop to any networked device
- Access to scanning, printing and faxing functionality from a single, unified client with complete security
- Increased time savings and efficiency using PIV card integration

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is the largest branch of the Veterans Administration (VA), providing comprehensive in-patient and out-patient healthcare to eligible veterans and their families. VHA oversees the largest integrated healthcare system in the U.S. with 152 medical centers, nearly 1,400 community-based outpatient clinics, and community living centers. Each year more than 8.3 million veterans seek services from over 53,000 licensed healthcare professionals associated with the VHA.

Management of this huge infrastructure is moving to a system centered within 21 geographical Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs).



“We had an individual solution at each site; whatever device and software was used to scan was chosen individually at each location. Now we have one solution that’s deployed throughout the VISN and is much easier to manage.”

Tim Harding, Region 4 Analyst
Platforms and Operating Systems Department
Implementation Manager

The VISNs were formed to enhance collaboration among regional providers to enhance efficiencies, meet local health care needs better and offer greater access to services. The VHA, like its peers outside the realm of government, searched for better ways to deliver health-care, streamline the systems that provide administrative services and adhere to regulatory mandates.

Consolidation at the New England Healthcare System.

VISN 1, or the VA New England Healthcare System, manages eight medical centers supporting 46 community-based outpatient clinics in Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Employing about 12,000 staff members, the New England Healthcare System treats over a quarter of a million patients a year with services ranging from basic outpatient care to acute medical/surgical and mental health services.

In 1996, VA began the creation of Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) to transform VA Health Care from a “Hospital System” to a “Healthcare System.” In a continuing effort to increase access and service delivery to patients, and an influx of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan that rely on delivery of services, VHA moved from a local independent medical center management system to VISN, a regional framework designed to allow VA medical centers to collaborate better and take advantage of a regionally managed one-solution system that manages not only patient records, but also provides a streamlined approach to managing administrative functions like human resources, billing and purchasing.

In making the transition, specific requirements were mandated to meet compliance requirements, including secure transfer of patient documents, secure printing of documents and a two-tiered authentication process required by the Department of Homeland Security. VISN 1 is one of the first regional VHA centers that is making that transition successfully.

Pinpointing requirements and making the change.

VISN 1 had been using software deployed at its Medical Center campuses, each with a unique configuration for scanning workflows at the multi-function device (MFD). This was a distributed solution that required multiple IT POCs to manage or administer each of the installations. Moreover, the VA had neither a centralized nor secure method of releasing print jobs. And it was using analog fax lines which made tracking and security difficult, adding levels of expense and risk.

Specific requirements for the new solution included:

- Two-factor authentication process at the device using CAC or PIV cards
- Scanning workflow integration
- Secure document capture with conversion to Word, Excel, searchable PDFs with audit trails, scalability, and electronic scan and fax
- Secure printing capability

Clearly, security was at the very heart of the requirements for the new solution.

Ultimately the VHA chose a hardware/software solution driven by Ricoh MFDs, and Nuance AutoStore® and

“To the end user the experience is seamless and the authentication with the PIV card is really a time-saver. Previously a user had to type in a log-in name and password at the device. Typing on the panel of an MFD can be challenging. Now it’s the simple swipe of a card.”

Tim Harding, Region 4 Analyst
Platforms and Operating Systems Department
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Nuance Output Manager™ from Nuance, which met all the specifications and then some. Deploying the solution required the delivery of about 650 MFDs to the geographically dispersed medical centers in the New England VISN 1 territory. Nuance then converted the existing 200+ scanning workflows into one single configuration. Nuance AutoStore was installed and deployed with the Federal Baseline Configuration—a standard scanning workflow configuration deployed to most Nuance Federal accounts—on two centrally located virtual servers, which replaced the multiple servers located throughout the VISN previously.

Two additional servers were added to handle Nuance Output Manager™ throughout the VISN and to establish ‘best practices’ for print queue expiration.

For example, the print solution captures all user-initiated print jobs from PC workstations (with name, print name, and date/time stamp) and allows only the specified user to release the print job from any MFD on the network. In addition, it captures metadata to associate the print with the authenticated user at the output device, where the user must be able to authenticate with a CAC or PIV card to release the held print jobs. In addition, a Nuance AutoStore configuration was added to track scanning volume and supply an audit trail of network activity.

According to Harding, VISN 1 is scanning close to 180,000 pages a month.

Harding and his team have also been able to customize workflows easily. “If I’m in Manchester (NH) working on the server in Bedford (MA), I can set up a workflow that allows a person in the Records Department in Maine to scan a document, direct where that document needs to go from the scanner to a file in a shared drive in Maine.”

“To the end user, it’s seamless but I know that document leaves Maine, travels to Bedford, gets translated and then shipped back to Maine and, using Active Directory rights, put into a folder the user requested. There are two levels of security here implemented through the device. First is the authentication through the PIV card and second is the Active Directory with controlled rights.”

Prior to the new system, a workflow was locally configured with local staff. Now if someone in New Hampshire needs a workflow for a new project and they need to scan documents to a new folder in their share drive, they just put in a ticket and Harding can set it up without the need for any local resources.

Nuance Output Manager is an integral part of the new solution and a VA mandate. “Output Manager’s secure print capabilities allow users to print from their desktops and then go to any networked device, swipe their PIV card and print out the job. This means if a staff member in Bedford headquarters has delivered a print job to the network but has to travel to another site, that print job is held in a secure queue until the user releases it at a networked printer in Rhode Island, for example,” says Harding.

“VISN 1 and the VA have been able to streamline and consolidate VA IT resources and business processes without sacrificing document security. Utilizing Nuance AutoStore® and Nuance Output Manager™ as the front end on the MFD for scanning and printing, users access a single interface which eliminates the need for intensive, time-consuming training.”

Tim Harding, Region 4 Analyst
Platforms and Operating Systems Department
Implementation Manager

“This system alleviates the risks associated with inadvertently leaving documents in a printer tray, and will also provide VISN 1 with an audit trail of printing requests to support compliance and costs. Secure print also enables rules-based printing which, for example, will route print jobs to the most cost effective device.”

The final step of the project will be to integrate Nuance AutoStore with an electronic fax solution. When complete, a button will be added to the panel of the MFDs so that the user will be able to access scanning, printing and faxing functionality from a single, unified client with complete security.

Efficiency benefits and mandates met.

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By adopting a PIV-based authentication solution, VISN 1 has become more compliant with numerous federal government security mandates and they have also been able to save costs by streamlining critical business processes which support the delivery of healthcare to the 250,000 patients it serves.

To learn more about Nuance document imaging solutions please call 1-800-327-0183 or visit nuance.com

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