

WASHINGTON HEALTH SYSTEM

CUSTOMER PROFILE: Synapse® Enterprise Information Systems





Washington Health System

John Ireland, Director of Radiology

Washington Health System and Fujifilm Join Forces to Expand Operational Efficiency Throughout the Enterprise

High quality patient care depends on a number of factors--expert physicians, dedicated nurses and technologists, and advanced medical equipment, to name a few. But even if a hospital has all of that, they may still lack the ability to communicate effectively and operate efficiently.

Washington Health System (WHS), located 35 miles south of Pittsburgh in Washington, Pennsylvania, is a complex, integrated healthcare organization that prioritizes operational efficiency to drive better patient care.

With more than 2,000 highly trained medical professionals, WHS is comprised of a mid-size community hospital, five outpatient diagnostic imaging satellite locations, and a smaller rural hospital located 25 minutes south of Washington.

With multiple facilities providing care to patients, WHS determined it was time to reassess its information system to think beyond radiology. By focusing on the entire enterprise, WHS was determined to find a solution designed to increase patient engagement, empower clinicians and ultimately, improve care outcomes.

Replacing a RIS: A Partnership Begins

In 2015, WHS set out to replace its legacy radiology information system (RIS). As the organization grew, it needed technology with greater functionality. To conduct a new vendor search, WHS formed a committee that included the RIS/PACS department, radiology management and various team leaders from within and outside of the radiology department.

"I had two priority requirements in selecting a replacement RIS vendor," said John Ireland, Director of Radiology, Washington Health System. "First, I wanted a vendor willing to partner with us to assure current and future functionality would be provided."

Ireland also sought a system that had a proven track record of stability. "We set out to find a robust system that operates in the background and is not a daily topic of conversation," said Ireland.

After assessing at least 10 vendors at the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) conference, Linda Klimek, B.S. RT (R), RCC, RIS Coordinator at WHS and a colleague—both members of the vendor search committee— then stopped by the Fujifilm booth. "About two and a half hours later we left the booth knowing that we had just found our new RIS vendor," said Klimek.

But Klimek also knew gut feelings weren't enough. WHS expected the committee to conduct a rigorous evaluation process. So Klimek and team did just that, narrowing the search and scheduling demos with a "short list" of their four favorite vendors- which included Fujifilm. Next, to get an idea of how the technologies performed in a real-world setting, the committee surveyed current customers for each vendor.

In the end, Klimek's initial hunch was correct. The WHS committee selected Fujifilm's Synapse Radiology RIS for both its exceptional technological capabilities as well as Fujifilm's approach to partnering with its customers.

"When I consider my two original key requirements, I have to say that Fujifilm's Synapse RIS has exceeded my expectations on both fronts," said Ireland.

Klimek concurs. In addition to technological capabilities, she says open communication and responsiveness to issues is vital in a vendor relationship. Fujifilm has proven to be an excellent partner over the years, according to Klimek.

"As part of Fujifilm's Customer Advisory Group, we would relay our wish list of product enhancements to Fujifilm management, engineers and developers," said Klimek. "Seeing those enhancements put into a future version of their system is proof that Fujifilm does listen to their customers."

"When I consider my two original key requirements, I have to say that Fujifilm's Synapse RIS has exceeded my expectations on both fronts,"

- John Ireland, Director of Radiology



Washington Health System

Linda Klimek, B.S. RT (R), RCC, RIS Coordinator

The Big Picture: Needs of the Enterprise

Synapse RIS was working well for WHS. For four years, the facility used the solution for its outpatient radiology scheduling, cath lab scheduling, tech workflows, and more. The technology was successful, helping to streamline processes and boost productivity.

Even so, WHS is an organization that believes in staying a step ahead to drive the best possible patient care.

“We realized that we had several departments outside of radiology that were using Fujifilm’s technology,” said Susanne Keenan RT (R), RIS/PACS Specialist. “These included Cardiology, Case Management, Admitting/Patient Registration, Outpatient Surgery, and Medical Records.”

In short, it was time to look at the “big picture” and assess the needs of the entire enterprise.

After all, one of WHS’s core values is “Continuous Improvement—Always striving to deliver excellent quality, safety and value.” That core value helps WHS to deliver on its mission of “Great Patient Care.”

As WHS was assessing their future business needs, Fujifilm was nearing completion of a new platform of Synapse RIS, with a sleek, new user interface, improved efficiencies for key workflows, robust system auditing, and many new features and added functionality.

When the WHS team was approached by the Fujifilm team to consider piloting the latest version of Synapse RIS, they quickly realized an upgrade to Fujifilm’s Synapse Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) version 7X would be an ideal solution for their enterprise needs.

Synapse EIS is one of the most comprehensive workflow management solutions on the market. With Synapse RIS as the foundation, Synapse EIS extends the innovative technological capabilities beyond radiology—to deliver extensive workflow management support to providers across the enterprise.

Simply put, Synapse EIS is packed with powerful tools that engage patients, improve staff productivity, enable referring physicians, and improve the overall care experience.

Teaming Up: An Unprecedented Upgrade

In 2020, WHS became one of the first health systems in the country to use Fujifilm’s Synapse EIS version 7X. As a pilot site, WHS was very satisfied with the benefits of the solution. However, making the actual transition—which required upgrading to an entirely new platform—would be no small feat.

Even during ordinary times, a platform transition is challenging. But it was July 2020 and COVID-19 was a critical factor. The upgrade would have to happen under arduous circumstances—and it would have to be done fully remotely.

“I was very skeptical of this unconventional method of a remote go-live. It was not without its challenges, but it all worked out well in the end,” said Klimek.

The rollout was carefully planned. WHS and Fujifilm teams worked in unison to prepare, train, and successfully navigate the upgrade during unusual circumstances.

Klimek and Keenan say the teamwork between the health system and the vendor was critical during three phases: Preparation, Training and the upgrade Go-Live.

“For the pilot activity Fujifilm made their team available to us during the entire go-live and post go-live process,” said Keenan.

As a first-of-kind project with version 7X, the preparation phase included a daily call between the two teams. During the call the teams discussed new findings, got updates on new releases of the software, and addressed any issues that WHS encountered. Keenan notes that the frequent, open communication was vital to the success of the project.

Thorough training was absolutely imperative for a successful transition to Synapse EIS. To optimize success, WHS and Fujifilm teamed up—or you might say, divided and conquered.

“We trained all users utilizing a variety of different methods,” said Klimek. “Fujifilm assisted us with training our 300+ staff members by providing workflow specific videos for our departments and also

“Seeing enhancement requests put into a future version of their system is proof that Fujifilm does listen to their customers.”

*- Linda Klimek, B.S. RT (R), RCC,
RIS Coordinator*



Washington Health System

Susanne Keenan RT (R), RIS/PACS Specialist

general navigation videos that we shared with our ancillary departments that use Synapse RIS as part of their daily workflow.”

The vendor videos were supplemented with live training by the WHS team. This included one-on-one training for all radiology users as well as one-on-one sessions for “super users” from ancillary departments. There were also refresher courses given during the 2-3 weeks preceding go-live.

Finally, Klimek and Keenan updated the workflow manuals they have created for all areas that use the Synapse RIS solution. These manuals provide step-by-step instructions, along with screen prints, that guide users through all of their workflows and RIS/EIS functions.

But perhaps the trickiest phase was the go-live phase. WHS and Fujifilm worked hand-in-glove to support all users during this process. “Providing go-live support to our users was a challenge since we have multiple offsite locations and two hospitals that operate 24/7/365,” said Keenan. “Our RIS/PACS team consists of five individuals that were charged with supporting all users 24/7.”

But Fujifilm played a key role as well by offering complete remote support. “The Fujifilm team rotated individuals throughout the day,” said Keenan. “They also provided us with an after hours contact person for the first week of go-live since they could not be here onsite to assist us.”

Overall, the upgrade process went smoothly and efficiently, especially considering the fact that it was an entire platform change.

“The most difficult part for WHS was that, since we are a hospital, we are always open and fully functional. So we were managing a major downtime in conjunction with the upgrade process,” said Keenan.

Keenan notes that WHS has done two small updates since the initial 7X upgrade and the downtime was minimal in both cases.

“The upgrade provides a more streamlined workflow with enhancements that save the users time in processing exams. This allows our staff to spend more face-to-face time with their patients.”

- Susanne Keenan, RT (R), RIS/PACS Specialist

Reaping Rewards: Clinical, Workflow, Patient Care Benefits

The WHS team involved in the transition to Synapse EIS 7X was recognized by hospital leadership for the outstanding job they did in working with Fujifilm on a smooth rollout.

Moreover, administrators/users and IT staff at WHS quickly adapted to the new version.

“The Radiology RIS/PACS teams have seen positive changes from an administrative perspective,” said Keenan. “The changes to custom management reports have been a great enhancement, as well as the audit trail of all administrative table changes.”

Synapse EIS has also provided many clinical and workflow benefits.

“The process of scheduling is simple and easy to use, yet can accommodate our complex scheduling rules,” noted Klimek. “Also, the use of tasks has been very beneficial and is the basis of many of our complex workflows.”

In addition, the new context view in Synapse EIS 7X is an enhancement that has simplified technologist workflow by combining and displaying all required information in one area. Moreover, the ability to generate a new order in a single action is a huge timesaver for staff, said Klimek.

Finally, Synapse EIS Version 7X is having a positive impact in helping WHS achieve its patient care mission.

“The upgrade provides a more streamlined workflow with enhancements that save the users time in processing an exam through the workflow,” said Keenan. “This allows our staff to spend more face-to-face time with their patients.”

The robust technology is also helping WHS better collaborate with colleagues across departments and throughout the enterprise. Since the original Fujifilm Synapse RIS install, there has been ongoing collaboration with the Cardiology Department for exam scheduling. But the new Synapse EIS 7X is helping to boost collaboration with other departments as well.

All in all, Fujifilm’s Synapse EIS is a vital tool that empowers the team at WHS to keep delivering great patient care.

To learn more about Fujifilm’s Synapse EIS, visit [SynapseEIS.com](https://www.fujifilm.com/synapseeis)

SYNAPSE[®]
EIS