

DISC and Optimed Team Up

Providing Ingham and McLaren Medical Centers with State of the Art Digital Archiving Solutions



Ingham Medical Center, located in Lansing, Michigan and their sister hospital McLaren Medical Center based in nearby Flint offer extensive care programs in the areas of cardiology and cardiac surgery. According to Connie Allen, Director of Cardiology at Ingham, the hospital sees about 7,000 cardiac cases annually.

When Ingham and McLaren began looking for a filmless digital archiving system, their evaluations led them to choose the DISC Optical Library (Orion Series) and Optimed's Opticor Image Management and Archiving System. Both Ingham and McLaren installed identical systems during the later part of 1999. Prior to the installation, all cardiac-catheterization labs were shooting images with 35mm film. By electing to switch their entire system to a digital format, hospital staff and patients reduced their exposure to radiation by an astonishing 60%.

Connie Allen explains, "Radiation exposure is always a concern. This has been one of the biggest benefits to the patients, physicians and staff. By digitally acquiring the images and transferring them (to be archived in the DISC library) the reduction of radiation to everyone in the room is huge."

Allen also cites the ability of the physicians to have random access to historical data. "Now our physicians are totally independent and can get to whatever patient information they need." Allen continued, "It didn't used to be this way. We would always have to come in after-hours and send a technician down to the basement to look for the old film."

Today, if a patient comes into the emergency room or gets into trouble in the critical care unit, patient information can be immediately typed in and retrieved. For the physicians at Ingham and McLaren Medical Centers, the images are now available 24 hours a day. The hospitals have also benefited by the reduction in operating costs. By switching from 35mm film to archiving images digitally in the DISC library, operation costs have dropped from \$55.00 to \$5.00 per case.

Another advantage to having the patient procedures archived in DISC's optical library comes from requests sent in by referring physicians. When all the images were stored on film, the information really couldn't be duplicated.

Allen recalled, "If a patient was retired and living in Florida and we had to send their cath file down there, it was very problematic when it came to getting it returned. Our only original went through a very labor-intensive process. We had to keep track who



had our film and try to retrieve them. Now, with the DISC library in place, it's a mute point."

Today Ingham and McLaren hospitals retrieve their medical images stored on the library and are then archived onto a CD. From there, the CD is sent to the requesting physician while the originals remain untouched. "Eliminating this tracking process has been wonderful," continued Connie Allen, "As a result, staff has been freed up to focus in on more critical needs, providing increased levels of operating efficiency for both hospitals."

The DISC Orion Series jukebox, located at each hospital, contains 1,000 disks and can store up to 21,000 patient procedures. It is designed to take both Ingham and McLaren through a 3 to 4 year growth period. As a result of its success with DISC and Optimed, Ingham is now exploring the possibility of digitizing their non-evasive cardiology images and echocardiograms as well.

Ingham and McLaren's desire to provide the best possible care to their cardiac-catheterization patients, physicians and staff has rewarded them with an environment that offers better safety, accessibility and efficiency.