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Manager of Medical Imaging, Huron Perth Health Care Alliance

Setting new standards

Diane Smith, Manager of Medical Imaging for the Huron Perth Health Care Alliance, St Marys, Canada explains why installing a full DR solution with MUSICA 3rd generation at its St Marys Memorial Hospital site is the first stage in setting new standards both across the Alliance and in Canada.

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Interview with: Diane Smith, Manager of Medical Imaging for the Huron Perth Health Care Alliance, St Marys, Canada

One of four sites that form part of the Huron Perth HealthCare Alliance, St Marys is a 20-bed community hospital dealing with trauma care and outpatient services. Its imaging solutions comprise ultrasound and X-ray departments staffed by a team of six imaging professionals.



“All of the imaging equipment within the Alliance was approaching the end of its useful life”, explains Diane Smith, manager of medical imaging for St Marys, “so the management team had to make a decision as to whether we could extend its life by upgrading our existing CR solutions or choose to make the move to new technology and all its undoubted benefits.

Agfa HealthCare solution fundamental to standardizing our imaging capabilities

“Although our St Marys site had the most immediate need, we knew we would require a rolling process of CR solution upgrading over the next few years, and I had a vision of standardizing our imaging solution across the four sites within the Alliance. We had, therefore, to consider not simply what we needed immediately but what would be right for the future of all the imaging departments. Taking all of that into account, the decision to go to direct radiology was a fairly straightforward one.”

Automation and image quality two of the key criteria

Given the importance of such a fundamental change, ensuring they replaced their hitherto successful CR offering with the best and most appropriate solution was one that received critical consideration, as Diane explains. “When specifying the solution, we set a number of clearly defined criteria by which to assess any

tenders. The most important was to have a solution that was fully automated – not something that everyone can offer. But we also needed to have this allied with high image quality and ease of use. Another key factor was that the solution had to be capable of fitting within the physical constraints we already had. There was no budget to make alterations to the fabric of the building itself and no opportunity to change the ventilation, so we really needed a turnkey solution.

MUSICA 3 delivers outstanding imaging results

“What made the Agfa HealthCare solution so attractive to us was that not only was the DX-D 600 fully automated, it came with both a fixed and wireless detector for maximum flexibility and workflow and with MUSICA 3 image processing software, with its reputation for image quality.

“To be honest,” says Diane, “I had seen and heard a lot about MUSICA 3 in a previous role, but had never had the opportunity to see its results first-hand. It is truly incredible the level of detail that MUSICA 3 provides and the radiologists have worked closely with the applications team to achieve the highest quality images possible.”

Early on during the tendering process, Diane and her team had the opportunity to visit Agfa HealthCare’s site in Brockton, Massachusetts (Signature Healthcare) to see the solution in action and question Agfa HealthCare’s onsite team.

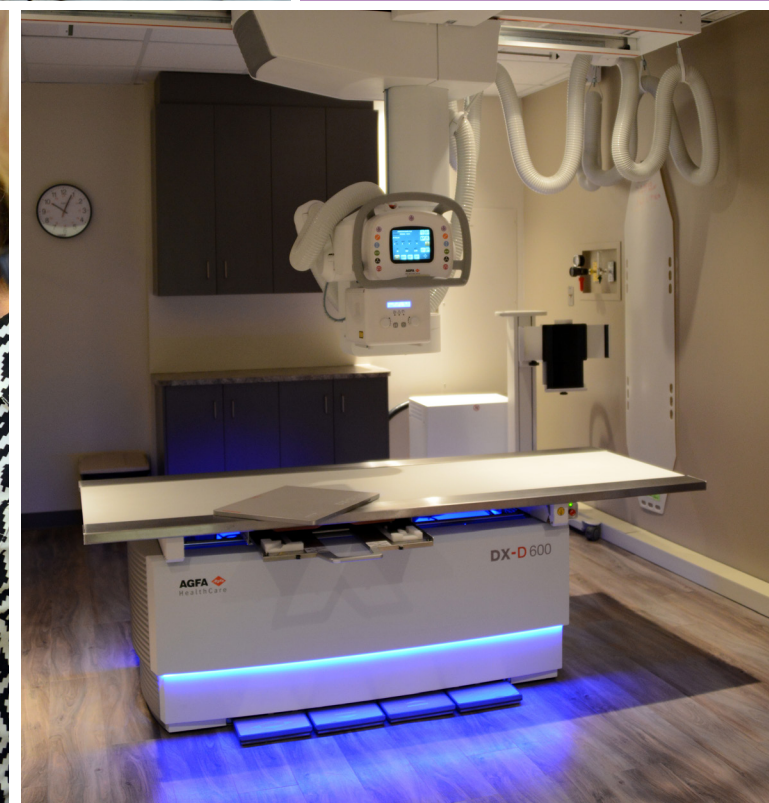
Impressed with knowledge and attitude of the Agfa HealthCare team

Says Diane, “We wanted to see and experience the exact solution that we were hoping to install on site here in Canada. I took our charge technologist and our quality assurance technologist with me when we visited. Each of them was charged with assessing their own element of speciality within the solution as well as gaining a view of the solution as a whole. We all found the Agfa HealthCare technologists on site were very well educated and highly skilled at using the equipment. They were able to



DX-D 600

- Two-detector, high-productivity, high throughput general radiography system with three configuration options: from manual, to semi-automatic, to fully-automatic
- Cesium Iodide DR detector technology, giving significant patient dose reduction potential
- Specially-tuned MUSICA for gold standard image processing, and NX workstation, for smoother workflow
- DICOM connectivity to PACS, HIS/RIS
- Can be integrated with our CR systems, bundling the high quality and flexibility strengths of each technology





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Huron Perth Health Care Alliance

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do all the maneuvering we required to really illustrate how we would be using the solution in Canada and were really open to discussing potential improvements.

“Another element of the solution that I found really encouraging was the control panel. While reviewing the solution we were able to see just how user friendly and intuitive it is to use. Given that those of us trialling it were from the management team and not so hands-on in a day-to-day role, it reassured me that the learning curve for the team back in Canada would not prove to be as big as I had expected. It also means that staff rotation is going to be much simpler once they are all working on the new solution due to their familiarity with it.”

DX-D 100 interim solution was incomparable with our existing mobiles

As with any busy working imaging environment, one issue that needed to be addressed was how to continue working while the new solution was being installed. For that, Agfa HealthCare offered its DX-D 100 mobile solution as an interim solution.

“Being able to transfer equipment to other rooms and use the mobile solution meant we could carry on as usual without needing to divert patients,” says Diane. “While we had experience of mobile solutions, the DX-D 100 was beyond comparison. The flexibility it offered in terms of the studies it could do, together with the level of quality imaging it delivered, meant that the trauma doctors could easily see results immediately on screen without having to wait for more formal results. Everyone was so impressed with it that they don’t want to work with our older models now! As a result we are working on keeping the DX-D 100 we have and potentially adding more than one to our portfolio in the future.”

Outstanding project management from start to finish

Looking to that future, Diane is confident in the choices she has made in respect of the DR solution but also with regard to having Agfa HealthCare as a long-term team member. “Our experience has been that Agfa HealthCare is prepared to go the extra mile not simply in terms of providing the right solution, but also in developing our long-term relationship. The project management from start to finish was outstanding; and when issues did arise – primarily because of unforeseen structural issues – we found the team really solution-focused and committed to solving our problems.

Service level agreements that provide both reassurance and confidence for the future

“And knowing that we have a well-defined seven year service arrangement reassures me that we have the right people looking after our solution; of particular importance when you understand this is the first installation of its type in Canada.”

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