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Director of Imaging Services, Signature HealthCare

Programmed to address ever-changing imaging demands

Susan Boulanger, Director of Imaging Services, Signature HealthCare, Brockton, USA, explains how the DR 400 fits into in her long-term upgrade program.

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Signature Health in Brockton, Massachusetts, is the oldest and largest in-patient facility serving Brockton and 21 surrounding municipalities, performing 190,000 radiology studies a year. A community-based non-profit teaching hospital with five outreach locations, it has 245 beds providing medical/surgical, pediatric and obstetric services, inpatient and outpatient psychiatry, radiation oncology, cardiac catheterization, Level II nursery and MRI.



The challenge of staying abreast of new imaging technology

With such a long-established facility, keeping pace with developments in imaging technology is a constant challenge; one that has lead the facility to implement at 10-year plan to overhaul its imaging solutions to ensure it remains abreast of latest developments. It was this plan that lead to the first installation in the US of the DR 400 – Agfa HealthCare’s scalable and affordable floor-mounted DR system – into Signature Health’s existing Agfa HealthCare solution portfolio. The portfolio already comprised the DX-D 100 mobile and DX-D 600 in-room solution, as Susan Boulanger, Director of Imaging Services, explains.

“We are around five years into our process of working systematically through a rolling program to replace outdated end-of-life solutions. Some time ago, as part of the program, we purchased Agfa HealthCare’s DX-D 600 in-room and a number of DX-D 100 mobile units.

“The particular site that we chose the DR 400 for is a practice that was purchased by Signature Health around seven years ago, which is approximately 15 miles from the main hospital. At the time the location was still using film, so we installed CR to support it in the short-term, with the intention that we would move it to DR as soon as possible.”

Low volume high image quality at cost-effective price

Susan continues: “Once we had seen the DR 400 demonstrated we knew it was the right fit both for the room and the volume of throughput. Its tube stand is a fixed floor mounted rather than ceiling mounted, which meant that although we would need electrical upgrades we would not need to undertake a lot of expensive structural work to the room. It was within a feasible price range for a low volume area, yet still gave us the same image quality that we get from our more costly solutions in higher volume areas.

Integrated table generator helped streamline space

“The integrated generator in the table obviously doesn’t make any difference to the functionality of the solution, but it did mean we could streamline the room and make it more aesthetically pleasing for the patients in an area where space is at a premium. The full floating tabletop facilitates ease of moving patients and makes the exams more comfortable and quicker to complete. Because, after all, what we are all about is the service we offer our practitioners and patients.”

Familiarity with NX software pays dividends

Another bonus of the DR 400 is that it comes with the upgraded version of the NX software. “The team were already very familiar with the program, having already experienced it through the other DR solutions, so it made bringing the staff online really simple.” That familiarity is also invaluable, given that the radiologists are not on site.

Says Susan, “Because the site is remotely connected, staff have access to all prior studies taken to provide a comprehensive report. Being able to work with the same software, irrespective of where they are working really pays dividends. I fully expect that we will ultimately get to a point where staff cannot tell at what site an image has been taken because all of the imaging will be based on the same image quality and operating software.”

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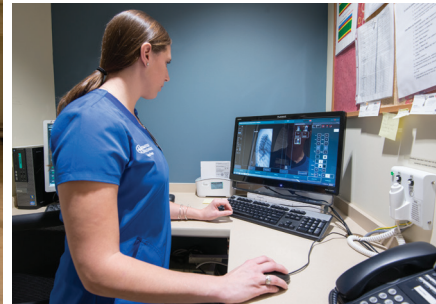
Interview with: Susan Boulanger, Director of Imaging Services, Signature HealthCare, Brockton, USA



DIRECT RADIOGRAPHY – DR 400

Scalable and affordable floor-mounted radiography system

- Flexible configurations and options for most needs
- Floor-mounted for cost-effective and easy installation and use
- Leading-edge solid components, offering reliability and maximum uptime
- Can be equipped with CR and DR technology



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Practice volume has already doubled

Although it is still relatively early days in terms of the installation of the DR 400 – the solution was installed in March 2015 – patient volume in the practise has already doubled, partially due to being able to undertake additional exams. Says Ms. Boulanger, “Our old solution meant that we had to consider patient body size – there simply wasn’t the technology available to image all body habit uses – and we also didn’t perform pediatric studies as we were worried about dose accuracy. That is not something we have to consider now with our Agfa HealthCare DR solutions.”

As to the future, in another three years Signature Health will have replaced all of its off-site imaging solutions and the upgrade program will switch focus to the main hospital facilities, as Susan explains.

“Our goal in the future is to replace all of the imaging equipment in the main facility that is not Agfa HealthCare for diagnostic imaging. There are a few solutions that we will retrofit rather than replace and we will do that with Agfa HealthCare’s DX-D Retrofit solution; others will require a full replacement.”

Putting MUSICA at the heart of all solutions

And the reason for such a whole hearted Agfa HealthCare endorsement? Susan says, “I can’t see in the future that there will be any technology that will be better than that provided by the MUSICA-based imaging solutions of Agfa HealthCare, so it simply makes sense to streamline our operations with what we consider to be the best.”

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