

Agfa HealthCare: From Small Acorns Big Trees Grow



Susan Boulanger, Director of Imaging Services at Signature Healthcare Brockton, Massachusetts, explains how replacements to its 25+ year old technology have been heavily influenced by its trial of Agfa HealthCare's DX-D 100 mobile solution.

As the oldest and largest in-patient hospital within its area, Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital serves a diverse community of needs. The hospital is home to a transitional residency program, and has a full imaging department. Twenty-one surrounding communities are also served by Signature Medical Group, the largest multi-specialty and multi-provider physician practise group in the area with 11 sites, including mirrored services in CT, MRI, ultrasound, radiology and mammography.

"Some of our existing equipment is more than 25 years old, and while it has been the workhorse of the department, we decided the equipment needed to be upgraded and replaced," explains Susan Boulanger. "At the same time, we also wanted to be able to put some additional tools into the hands of the people making time-sensitive clinical decisions. I was eager to add digital mobile solutions so that if you were in the emergency room doing a trauma exam or in the operating room suites, the image could come up on the screen instantly to enable the team to work quickly on that patient without having to wait. They could get a general view of what was happening even prior to the radiologist doing a final interpretation."

The radiologists' choice

Boulanger decided the most effective way to source the right solution was to undertake a series of trials. "We looked at three different models and did demos over a three- to four-month period. I then pulled 10 images from each mobile demo machine and showed them to different radiologists, asking them to judge on image quality alone." The outcome was not what she had expected. "When we looked at image quality specifically, all of the radiologists picked the Agfa HealthCare images."

MUSICA image quality was just stunning

While Boulanger was surprised: "I thought there would be more similarities between vendors", the real difference was made by Agfa HealthCare's image processing MUSICA. "The bone work was just stunning," says Boulanger, "and the DX-D 100 has made a significant impact on our ability to care for critically ill patients. It allows physicians to make minor or even major changes immediately because the images are available instantly."

"Images are superior to fixed rooms of other vendors"

The DX-D 100's reputation was further enhanced when a power failure during a snow storm last winter resulted in it being used to support the rooms in the main radiology department for about 30 minutes. "For a brief period we were acquiring images only on the DX-D 30C, the DX-D 100's portable detector, and the team thought these images were actually better than images taken on some of the other vendors' permanently installed digital equipment. The images aren't just superior for a mobile solution, they are simply superior, so when our most recent off-site location opened up we purchased a fixed Agfa HealthCare room – the DX-D 600, with Full Leg Full Spine capabilities.

Full Leg Full Spine an invaluable resource

"Although we don't have a high volume use for the FLFS– maybe a few times a week – when the need is there it is invaluable. The patient simply stands for a few seconds while you capture full, accurate images that don't require multiple exposure stitching, so there is less room for error. It's a really great piece of technology."

DX-D 600 delivers better patient comfort

Another major benefit of the DX-D 600 solution is the luxury of spending more time with the patient. "The technologist no longer has to step out. They can do all of their work in the vicinity of the patient; worklists, protocols, and so on, so it allows more interaction and increases the speed of performing the exam because of the immediacy of the images.

"Before we had the DX-D 600, typically, by the time the radiologist was reading the image, the physicians would be waiting to decide how to care for the patient. Now they are able to see that image within 20 seconds. Having the DX-D 600, with its two detectors, also decreases the amount we have to move patients around as we are able to image from the same equipment."

Flexibility helps even out workflow

The flexibility the DX-D 600 offers also pays dividends. "Our radiologists are often shared between several different locations and the need to maximise workflow effectiveness, share information and read images from any location is critical to our success. With superior quality images available to any radiologist at any location, we can manage workload more effectively and even out any peaks and troughs."

Proactive and timely service support

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Boulanger admits the initial decision to go with a new vendor for such essential solutions posed important questions. "One area of consideration was no existing install base here for Agfa HealthCare. I was concerned about how much service support there would be and how that would work, but they have been fabulous. They respond, they are timely; they stop in just to do routine checks. The service support and the working relationship with the service team are wonderful."

Installing Agfa HealthCare solutions for image quality alone makes sense

As a result, the relationship looks set to be a long and fruitful one. "We did the mobile units, then we did a fully automatic room, then we did a semi-automatic room. We have a five-year plan – and as we open off-sites and move things around, there is definitely a plan to continue to upgrade and replace equipment. Agfa HealthCare has become a vendor of choice for us; they have worked well with us, the installation process has been easy to manage and, just based on the image quality alone, installing more Agfa HealthCare solutions makes sense."

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Source: [Agfa Healthcare](#)

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