

By Paul Mendel

IT DOES WONDERS FOR WORKFLOW

A busy breast center chose Carestream's PACS and multi-modality breast imaging workstation for its flexibility and features.

When administrators at Park Nicollet Jane Brattain Breast Center (St. Louis Park, MN) went looking for a new PACS and workstation, they allotted plenty of time for what amounted to a sizable decision. When the head-to-head comparisons were over, a unanimous verdict for the Carestream PACS and the company's multi-modality breast imaging workstation quickly emerged.

As a relatively late entrant in the selection process, Carestream nonetheless won the competition thanks to smooth integration with Park Nicollet's existing Centricity RIS, PowerScribe, and CADstream systems.

"I wondered why people weren't out there looking at this amazing PACS solution, so I brought it to our head radiologist so that she could see it," said Kathy Wilson, RTRM, clinical supervisor of Mammography at Park Nicollet. "I told Carestream that this workstation was mammography's best hidden secret. Once you get an opportunity to look at it, you'd be crazy to pass it up."

Wilson believes the move away from a standalone workstation is helping the facility gear up for the future. These days, patients are scheduled in the RIS while a message is sent to the file room so priors can be digitized right away. "When the radiologist sits down in the screening environment, there is desktop integration," explained Wilson. "With one click of the button, a radiologist can pull all priors and reports. If the radiologist needs an MRI report, it's all brought up on a four-bank view workstation for him to see."

If something such as manual dictation is desired, the option is there, as is the ability to do structured reporting where radiologists can type information, create a report, and sign it. "Once he signs the report and is happy with it, he marks it, closes it, and brings up the next patient," said Wilson. "Everything is available by logging into one system instead of logging into various systems. We could not believe Carestream could make it that seamless. That's what we were looking for, but we really did not think it was out there."

A streamlined workflow now helps the center's five locations perform 400 mammography imaging exams a day. Enhanced radiologist productivity enables same-day reporting for all diagnostic and screening exams. Reports on screening exams from remote clinics previously took several days to deliver.

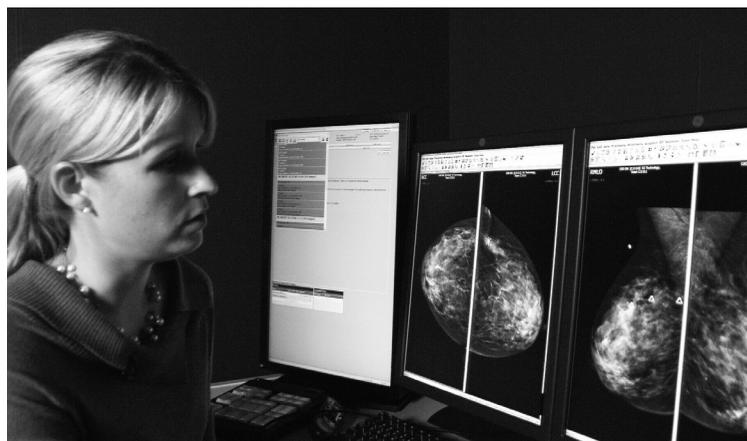
Referring Physicians and Patients

Referring physicians have noticed that reports are much timelier, with some even coming on the same day as the mammogram. "We're reading in the afternoon what we imaged in the morning," said Wilson. "Radiologists are reading in a batch,

and they are not interrupted. In the diagnostic environment, we are reading off a PACS workflow, because we are checking patients as they come in."

Most patients do not know what PACS stands for, but it often translates to fewer sleepless nights for women in high-stress situations. Radiologists and referring doctors see the positive effect on patient care, and they appreciate the tight integration that enables them to log in once and have instant electronic access to patient history, as well as prior imaging exams and reports.

"These workstations allow our radiologists to quickly and easily read exams from all modalities and vendors at a single workstation," said Barbara Luikens, MD, a radiologist who is also the center's medical director.



With Carestream's PACS and multi-modality breast imaging workstation, radiologists at Park Nicollet enjoy desktop integration, and can pull all priors and reports with a single click.

Fingertip Access to Tools, Data

"Every aspect of the workflow is at our fingertips, from prior exams and reports to one-touch voice recognition and specialized tools," said Dr Luikens. "Personalized hanging protocols then enable each radiologist to achieve maximum productivity and ease of use. From a radiologist's perspective, this is an ideal reading environment."

Looking back on the selection process, Wilson attributes the Carestream choice to a stringent look at the facts, and a keen knowledge of her organization's needs. "Sometimes it is hard to do the head-to-head demos when you are choosing a new PACS, but it is worth it if you eventually find an advanced system that can integrate with current technology as well as future advances that are coming down the road."

Paul Mendel is a contributing writer for *Imaging Economics*.