

HOSPITAL'S MEDICAL IMAGING DEPARTMENT GOES DIGITAL

ROME (May 7, 2004) – Rome Memorial Hospital's Medical Imaging Department is implementing a sophisticated network that expands its ability to deliver quality images and dictated results more quickly, announced Department Director Josh Porte.

The department is converting from using traditional film to digital technology for a significant portion of its diagnostic medical imaging studies. Once a new radiology information system is in place, the hospital will implement a voice-activated dictation system and a picture archive communication system (PACS) which stores images and dictated results electronically. The three new systems are expected to be operational in June.

"In healthcare, all of the tests and treatments ordered and the assessments and results they generate produce volumes of information," Porte said. "As part of the hospital's strategic plan, we are modernizing our computerized systems to help streamline the way we manage patient information."

Computed tomography (CT scan), nuclear medicine and ultrasound images will be delivered directly from the medical imaging equipment to the PACS where they can immediately be read by the radiologists. There will be no waiting for films to be processed.

"For patients, it means that their physicians will have the results of their studies more quickly for diagnosis and treatment," said radiologist John Restivo, M.D., chairman of the Medical Imaging Department. "Because they are stored digitally, the images and the results can be shared across secure networks so they can be viewed by physicians in other departments, such as the Emergency Room or the Intensive Care Unit. In addition, web-based portals will allow physicians to view the images from the convenience of their own office."

"This technology also gives us greater control over the images," Dr. Restivo said. "Because they're digital, we can adjust the contrast and magnify or rotate the images to get a better view. When patients need copies of their images we can give them a compact disc to take to their physician."

"The hospital is the first Medical Imaging Department in Central New York to launch the latest voice-activated dictation/transcription (VAD) system," said Chris Dubay, diagnostic imaging IT coordinator. "Because reports do not have to be transcribed manually, we can provide rapid turn-around-time for results. After the radiologist dictates the report, it is available online immediately."

In the fourth quarter of the year, the department will implement the second phase of its conversion. When a new computerized radiography system is installed, most of the diagnostic X-rays will also be digitized. Mammography will be the only technology still using traditional film.

According to Porte, traditional film remains the gold standard for mammography, at least until advancements are made in digital mammography technology.

"At Rome Memorial Hospital, our commitment to the investment in technology is matched only by the dedication of our staff," said Mark Snyderman, assistant vice president planning/outpatient services.

“Combined, these four advances enable the hospital to strengthen our efficiencies of care by delivering essential diagnostic information into the hands of our physicians more quickly.”

At the hospital’s main campus at 1500 N. James St., the Medical Imaging Department’s diagnostic capabilities include CT scans, general radiographic and fluoroscopic X-rays, nuclear medicine, ultrasound, bone densitometry and mammography.

The hospital also provides general X-ray services at six off-site locations: 1617 N. James St., 107 E. Chestnut St., 1801 Black River Blvd.; 1819 Black River Blvd.; 200 Spencer Ave., Sylvan Beach; and 13407 State Route 12, Boonville.