



Hospice Provider, Caris Healthcare, Improves Customer Service and Secures Patient Information while Speeding-up the Intake Process

THE CHALLENGE

Caris Healthcare, a private hospice care provider company with branches in Tennessee and South Carolina, needed a way to securely store patient intake forms while making the information available to select staff members.

THE SOLUTION

The FileWorks Online™ virtual file cabinet provides secure storage that meets HIPAA technology standards and provides online, permission-based access with an easy-to-use interface. FileWorks Scanning Software brings paper documents directly into FileWorks Online™ by interfacing with a TWAIN scanner.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

After implementing FileWorks Online™ in a pilot program, Caris Healthcare was able to improve the patient intake system by:

Speeding up the time-critical patient intake process.

- Eliminating paper versions of documents, except those containing wet signatures that are required by law to be retained.
- Decreasing the number of file cabinets needed to store documents and therefore decreasing the amount of space needed for file cabinets.
- Furnishing easy disaster recovery by protecting patient files from fire, flood and theft.
- Providing anywhere access to documents—in time employees can work from home as conveniently as working in the office.

CASE STUDY

FileWorks, Inc.
www.FileWorks.com

Hospice Provider, Caris Healthcare, Improves Customer Service and Secures Patient Information while Speeding-up the Intake Process

*FileWorks Online™ replaces paper-based process
and facilitates company growth*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rapidly growing hospice care provider, Caris Healthcare, is committed to using virtual services to keep the company efficient and focused on its primary service. Although most processes and paperwork were already virtual, the company was using file cabinets and paper documents for the intake process. The company looked for a way to store documents in digital format and make them accessible to appropriate staff.

The implementation of FileWorks Online™ for intake paperwork significantly improved the amount of time it takes to complete the intake process. Caris Healthcare has internal policies for same day admission of new patients, while other providers may take days for the same admission. Hospice patients are always in need of enhanced medical when they are admitted. When minutes are important, this system helps Caris Healthcare to rapidly admit a new patient so the company can quickly provide services to the patients and their families.

COMPANY PROFILE

Established in 2004, Caris Healthcare is comprised of doctors, nurses, social workers, bereavement counselors, chaplains and volunteers who provide medical, emotional, social, and spiritual support to patients and families coping with life-limiting illnesses. Patients can reside in their homes, in a nursing facility or in an assisted-care facility throughout Tennessee and in parts of South Carolina. The company has 16 Caris Units or Caris Contracted Centers, and has aggressive plans to expand to a national presence.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

When establishing Caris Healthcare, CEO Norman McRae envisioned a business with mobile access to information that would match the way his employees work. The Caris Healthcare IT team has assembled a collection of Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) products to provide the healthcare providers, patients and families with an online network of tools. They use these products for patient data, prescription benefits management, performance assessment, contact and messaging services, financial management and contract compliance.

Caris Healthcare's motto is: "providing *life* to days...when days may not be added to life." In the business of hospice care, time and efficiency is critical. When terminally ill patients or their families request hospice care, it is important for Caris Healthcare to start providing services as quickly as possible. The company strives for same-day admissions to the care program.

The intake process involves paperwork that requires a wet signature (which is a signature on paper). These documents are transferred to the Caris Healthcare office where the request is entered into the system. With all other systems available online, the company needed an system that would give them online storage and access for the intake documents.

THE FILEWORKS ONLINE™ SOLUTION

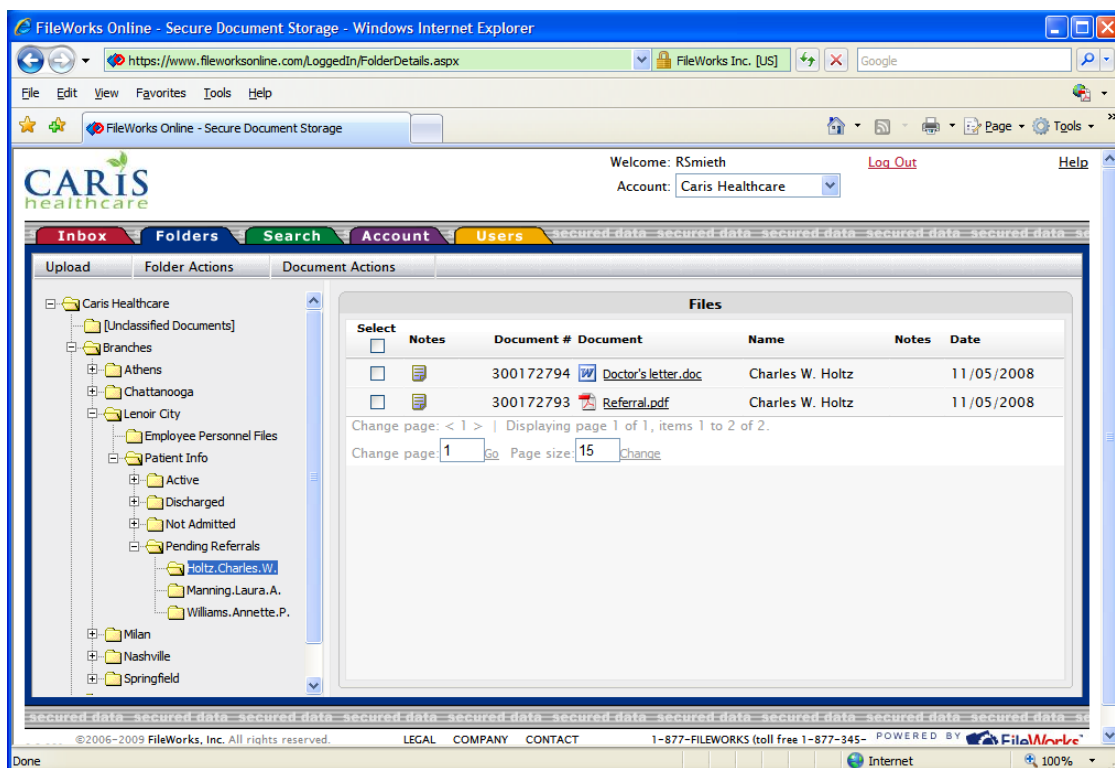
IT Director Troy Chambers first looked at the resources already at place at the company and found that one of the products offered document storage. He tested the system, but found that it only accepted one document at a time and required that each document be individually indexed. Upload to the system was also very slow.

Chambers turned to the Internet to search for options. He evaluated several product sites and, attracted by the FileWorks Online™ security features and the month-long free trial, he set up a trial account. After his initial review of the product, he implemented a pilot program at one of the Caris Healthcare branches and added the branch manager and intake personnel on the account.

When determining whether each person was invited to the account as a User or a Guest, Chambers evaluated the rights and access they would need. The office manager, who needs to be able to review documents, was given User-level rights to access all documents on the system. The intake coordinators, who manage the process by scanning and indexing the paper documents, creating files, and moving files were given User access. The remaining intake coordinators who only need access to the upload or view the documents were given Guest access. In time, physicians may be given Guest access to their patient files for viewing and uploading changes.

Chambers set up a folder for each branch. Within each branch folder are the following folders:

- Employee Personnel Files
- Patients
 - Active—When a new patient is accepted into the program, his/her folder is moved from the Pending Referrals folder to the Active folder.
 - Discharged—When a patient leaves the program, his/her folder is moved from the Active folder to the Discharged folder.
 - Not Admitted —When a new patient is not admitted into the program, his/her folder is moved from the Pending Referrals folder to the Not Admitted Folder
 - Pending Referrals —When an intake request is received, a new folder is created by patient name in the Pending Referrals folder.



*Note:
To protect patient privacy,
this screen
capture is
a replica.*

Then, a New Intake notification was set up to alert the office manager when a new client folder is added to the Pending Referrals folder.

The Intake Process with FileWorks Online™

The intake staff members collect the paper referral documents that request access to the program for a terminally ill patient. These documents are scanned to email, faxed or delivered to the office.

Chambers is testing FileWorks Online's integrated faxing, which will deposit the faxed documents directly into a folder in the FileWorks Online™ account. This saves the staff the time of picking up the fax document from the fax machine and scanning it into the system—and it keeps the documents private, as required by HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accessibility Act) regulations.

Then, an intake coordinator creates a new folder for that patient (by patient name) in the Pending Referrals folder and applies the New Intake notification to that folder. The coordinator uses the FileWorks™ Scanning Software and a Kodak ScanMate i1120 TWAIN-enabled scanner to quickly scan, index and upload the paper documents into the new patient folder. A notification email is automatically sent to the manager when documents are placed in a new folder so s/he will know to review the incoming paperwork and determine if the patient will be accepted into care.



The coordinator uses the FileWorks™ Scanning Software and a Kodak ScanMate i1120 TWAIN-enabled scanner to quickly scan, index and upload the paper documents into the new patient folder.

If the coordinator does not apply the New Intake notification to the folder, the coordinator sends the manager an email link to the folder once it is complete and documents are ready for review. This is particularly helpful when all of the intake documentation does not arrive in the office at the same time.

Once the patient file is reviewed, the manager moves the file to the Active folder or the Not Admitted folder.

Prior to using FileWorks Online™ to help manage the process, the paper client intake forms were reviewed and then stored in a locked filing cabinet. Although Caris Healthcare is still required to keep the original copies of any signed forms, all documents are scanned to FileWorks Online™ and then only the signed documents are kept in the physical cabinet in the office. Originals of documents without signatures are then shredded by a secure document shredding service.

The Billing group also logs in to FileWorks Online™ to add insurance approvals to the patient's file. The Billing group authenticates insurance coverage for patients who request hospice services. A PDF-format form is completed and emailed to Caris Healthcare's ticket tracking system that tracks all communications, where it is faxed to the insurance company. If the patient is admitted, the coordinator faxes the form and communication from the ticket tracking system into FileWorks Online, where it becomes part of the patient's file.

Chambers believes the system also will simplify audits. Remote auditing will speed-up audits, reduce travel time and in-person auditing, and decrease time between audits. Auditors can be provided User or Guest access to the folders they need to review, which saves time over sifting through paper files. The tracking functions within FileWorks Online™ will also allow auditors and company officials to examine who has viewed each document.

The company also uses FileWorks Online™ to store employee personnel files. Listing employees by name, the goal is to store hiring forms, performance evaluations, notes from clients and families, and any other paper documents associated with the employee. Strict control over access to the folders ensures the employee's privacy.

THE BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING FILEWORKS ONLINE™

Caris Healthcare has experienced a number of benefits by implementing FileWorks Online™.

Fits the Company's Established IT Model

The system is flexible and can be accessed by the appropriate healthcare employees while they are working with a patient or on a patient's case. It fits the company's established IT model for accessibility via the Internet and has the security features needed to help the company comply with medical regulations.

Increases Efficiency

When admitting a patient to hospice care, it is important to Caris Healthcare to process the patient's information as quickly as possible. Chambers noted that the company is "constantly asking 'How can we be even quicker than we are?'"

After implementing FileWorks Online™, the intake staff immediately noticed that the system was more time efficient. They purchased a scanner and now scan documents directly to FileWorks Online™. They have found the batch uploading and batch indexing features to be most beneficial for indexing and uploading the documents quickly to one or more folders in the system.

"The integrated scanning put FileWorks Online™ over the top when we were reviewing new systems," said Chambers. "Instead of scanning to the desktop and then, in a separate transaction, uploading files to the system, the FileWorks Scanning Software streamlined the process, saving the intake staff time and steps."

Reduced Paper Files


In addition to keeping the patient information safe and safely backed-up, using FileWorks Online™ also allows a branch to thin out their paper files. Although the branch must keep all original documents with wet signatures (signatures on paper), the staff is able to eliminate all other paper intake documents, substantially reducing the amount of paper kept in the file cabinets.

The branch can then minimize the space needed for physical files—saving money on the purchase of file cabinets and rental of office space for the cabinets. With the company's ongoing expansion, the files could become unmanageable. "This system will allow us to minimize our use of file cabinets or move them to an off-site or less convenient location since each branch will only need to access the paper copies of signed forms for auditing purposes," said Chambers.

Security & Disaster Recovery

Contained on the intake forms is private patient information, such as the patient's name, social security number, address and contacts, primary ailments, insurance company information, etc. Some of this information is stringently regulated by HIPAA.

FileWorks Online™ employs advanced technology safeguards that meet HIPAA standards for access and audit control, transmission security and data integrity, and authentication of person or entity. Transfer of information is protected by Network Solutions' SiteSafe Extended Validation SSL certificates which provides 128-bit encryption during transit and ensures the authenticity of the site.



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Troy Chambers
IT Director

With FileWorks Online™, files stored in the account are immediately replicated to an offsite data backup center located in a different state. Unlike other SaaS systems, files are also encrypted while stored on FileWorks Online™ servers, ensuring that only those with proper permissions have access to unencrypted files.

Disaster recovery is effortless for Chambers' IT group because documents can be accessed using almost any computer. He knows patient files are protected from fire, flood and theft.

Implementation, Training and Growth

Chambers is just completing his pilot program and is beginning to roll out FileWorks Online™ to the company's 16 other branches. He finds the system easy to manage from the IT department perspective. During the pilot program, he has been pleased with the new features FileWorks has added to the system—features that are implemented without requiring labor from the IT staff. Instead, the staff can focus on the best way to use FileWorks Online™ to serve their needs and respond to “how to” questions.

He finds the system easy to put into practice because the interface is simple and is based on a folder structure that is similar to Windows. “It’s not something I’d have to manage or hire someone to manage,” said Chambers. “From the IT side, FileWorks Online™ was easy to implement—and it was easy to explain to other individuals who are not technical.”

THE FUTURE OF FILEWORKS ONLINE™ AT CARIS HEALTHCARE

Chambers envisions using more of FileWorks Online's features in the future as the product is put into place at all of the Caris Healthcare branches. He is considering how the company might use electronic signatures and expand access to FileWorks Online. “The next phase would be to give Guest access to certain patients and physicians,” said Chambers.

“Caris Healthcare is fast-growing and we want to expand more,” said Chambers. “FileWorks Online™ is helping us to get more things into place to make this process more efficient and will definitely help us facilitate our growth.”

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ABOUT FILEWORKS ONLINE™

FileWorks Online™ is an affordable virtual file cabinet for centralized storage and safe sharing of files with anyone, anywhere at any time. Extensive rights controls allow account owners to give others access to the account at varying levels and with varying individual rights. Access to files is tracked and may be reviewed for eDiscovery and audits.

Delivered online as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), FileWorks Online™ relieves companies and IT departments of the time and expense burdens associated with running a complex filesharing server.

Data is protected by state-of-the-art security. FileWorks Online™ is Intel® Certified, which ensures that it is enabled for Intel® technologies, free of all known significant security vulnerabilities, and monitored for security issues. Extended site validation through Network Solutions' SiteSafe ensures 128-bit encryption during transmission and a \$1 million relying party guarantee. With FileWorks Online™, all files are encrypted while stored on the server—a security feature rarely offered by other online document storage services.

FileWorks Online™ increases a business's effectiveness and efficiency with its unique built-in features, including

- file sharing inside or outside of the company
- email links to direct other users to specific files and folders
- the ability to custom brand the account with a company logo and offer branded login options
- email and text notifications when activities occur in the account
- electronic signatures for legal or internal sign-off on documents
- integrated scanning that takes documents from the scanner directly to specific folders
- online faxing from and into the account
- document notes for making notations with a document

Pricing starts at \$29.99 per month, which includes real-person, North America-based customer support. FileWorks Online™ has no long term commitment.