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Integration is Everything

Warren General Hospital Meets Complex Grant Requirements on an Aggressive Schedule with Iatric Systems Professional Services

OBJECTIVE: Warren General Hospital had a tight timeframe to meet the terms of a grant to automate the delivery of lab results using the Direct standard for the secure exchange of healthcare communications. This would be the first use of Direct for both Warren General and the behavioral health practice that would be receiving the results.

SITUATION: Warren General Hospital is an 89-bed acute care hospital in Warren, Pennsylvania, about an hour's drive from Erie. The hospital is committed to building strong ties with area physicians, and uses Iatric Systems Physician Office Integration™ to deliver lab and imaging results within their EMR workflow. When Secure Exchange Solutions (SES), the state-certified Health Information Service Provider (HISP), engaged Warren General for the grant opportunity, they also engaged Iatric Systems for project management and interface services, knowing Iatric Systems ability to exchange data between disparate clinical systems.

SOLUTION: To meet the grant requirements in a tight timeframe, Iatric Systems Professional Services team developed the hospital's project plan and made sure that Warren General was able to meet cut-off dates and times. Iatric Systems also implemented the outbound interfaces, working closely with SES and Netsmart, the behavioral health practice's EMR vendor.

RESULTS: The project was completed on time and met the grant requirements. Lab results now flow automatically from Warren General via the SES HISP to the behavioral health practice as a Direct encrypted file, flowing into the Netsmart EMR as part of the clinicians' workflow. Warren General continues extending Physician Office Integration to bring electronic results to more practices in its service area, and is also rolling out the Iatric Systems PtAccess™ patient portal to provide better service for patients.

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>
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>   Warren General Hospital

For nearly a decade, Warren General Hospital has relied on Iatric Systems to automate the exchange of clinical data in new ways to improve safety, efficiency, and the delivery of care. That expertise was put to the test when the hospital needed to rapidly implement the delivery of lab results over the Direct protocol as part of a complex and prestigious integration project with multiple stakeholders.

Connecting Physician Practices
Warren General uses Iatric Systems Physician Office Integration to deliver results to physicians running a variety of EMR systems, streamlining their workflow while eliminating the delays of faxing. "Physicians get their lab and imaging results much faster, and we're able to be much more sensitive to their needs," says Rick Setili, of Warren General Hospital. He also appreciates the 24x7 monitoring and troubleshooting that ensures physician practices stay connected with the central EHR. "Many times I have no idea there was a problem until I get an email that a case has been opened, addressed, and closed. It's good to have Iatric Systems as a partner looking after the interfaces on our behalf because practices expect them to run 24x7, and there's very little margin for downtime."

Connecting to Meet Grant Requirements in a Rapid Timeline
When Secure Exchange Solutions (SES), the Pennsylvania state-certified Health Information Service Provider (HISP), engaged Warren General for a grant opportunity, they also called on Iatric Systems to provide integration expertise and project management. Sponsored by the Pennsylvania eHealth Partnership Authority, the grant was for a pilot project to automate the delivery of structured lab results from Warren General to Beacon Light Behavioral Health System (an area provider of behavioral health services) using the Direct protocol for healthcare communications. This would be the first use of Direct for both facilities.

"We had a very a tight timeline to complete the whole process, from kickoff conference to sending live results across the interface," Rick notes. "Frankly, I was skeptical that we could pull it off." As end-to-end project manager, Joe Sainz, a senior consultant on the Iatric Systems Professional Services team, orchestrated the efforts of all stakeholders and made sure that target dates were met. The Iatric Systems team also applied their technical expertise, installing software, implementing outbound results interfaces, and working with SES and Netsmart (the Beacon Light EHR vendor) to test transactions on their end. The work was completed on time and met the grant requirements. Lab results now flow from Warren General in HL7 and TIF format via Direct Encrypted Email into the Netsmart EMR at Beacon Light as part of the clinician's workflow — all without manual intervention.

"I was surprised and amazed. This is without doubt the fastest implementation of a lab result interface that I've ever been involved with," Rick says. "Because of the short timeframe, we didn't have the luxury of easing into this project. I give Joe a lot of credit for keeping everyone on task and every step tightly coordinated so we could hit our critical cut-off times."

Connecting Patients
Warren General continues building stronger ties to its physician community, rolling out Physician Office Integration to additional practices to enable electronic ordering and sharing results. The hospital is also deploying the Iatric Systems PtAccess™ patient portal, which will be rebranded as MyPortal and will pull information from the hospital's MEDITECH EHR and the Allscripts™ EMR used by the hospital's core medical group. Patients will have instant access to information about their medications, allergies, lab results, discharge instructions, scheduling, and more, along with easy automated bill payments. "There were other options for patient portals, but based on our history with Iatric Systems we're confident we made the right choice," Rick adds.

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