



Maine Medical Center Uses the eScription Platform to Improve Efficiency in the Face of Rising Transcription Demands

Maine Medical Center is a 606-bed teaching hospital serving southern and central Maine and a major referral center for northern New England. It is also the largest hospital in the state. Several years ago, due to growing transcription demand across medical groups in its multi-location campus, the hospital found that its existing transcription system was strained. Staffing issues, recruitment challenges, and rising labor costs for medical transcriptionists (MTs) were making it more and more difficult for Maine Medical's HIM Department to handle the increasing demand for transcription services while controlling costs.

Solution to Staffing Challenges: Computer Aided Medical Transcription

In 2000, Maine Medical Center implemented the eScription platform for computer aided medical transcription using background speech recognition. "As our volume grew, we needed to find a way to increase the productivity of our transcription process," stated John Avedian, HIM Director at Maine Medical Center. "I was open to the idea of speech recognition technology that truly valued the transcriptionists and did not set out to make them obsolete."

The technology at the heart of the eScription platform is called computer aided medical transcription (CAMT), an approach proven to improve the productivity of MTs and thereby deliver significant cost savings to the healthcare organization. With CAMT, powerful background speech recognition technology converts the spoken word to written text from models developed solely from the medical transcription environment and employs contextual information to create high quality first drafts. The software interprets and formats dictations in order to transcribe what a clinician intends to be in a document and not necessarily what he or she has said. For instance, when a clinician dictates "HPI," he or she will likely mean "History of Present Illness." The format and documents are produced in the

Highlights

- MT productivity doubled
- Transcription cost savings of over \$2 million
- Enhanced quality of transcribed reports
- Improved document turnaround time
- MTs 'happier than ever' according to survey

style set up and approved by each healthcare organization. The eScription client software makes the editing process as fast and efficient as possible with features such as shortcut keystrokes and audio speed controls. The MTs' edits deliver important, automatic feedback that continuously enhances the speech recognition engine, enabling it to provide increasingly better drafts over time. A single administrative console helps supervisors manage the complete clinical documentation process.

Editing is the Key

The Medical Center's staff of 17.5 FTEs edits the draft documents, with overnight and overflow editing handled by an outsourced transcription company. As editors, MTs typically complete the transcription process twice as fast as if typing documents from scratch. This productivity increase helped Maine Medical Center both handle the additional transcription demand and save costs by reducing the volume of outsourced transcription. "We have experienced double the productivity compared to regular transcription modalities," stated Jefferson Howe, MS, CMT, Transcription and Chart Completion Manager at Maine Medical Center.

"The eScription team was very responsive to our requests. They understand the hospital environment and worked with us as partners to reach our goals."

—John Avedian, HIM Director

No Interference with Clinicians' Workflow

Maine Medical Center has achieved its cost savings results without interfering with clinicians' workflow. "Maine Medical Center clinicians did not have to adjust their speaking patterns or explicitly train the software in order to use it," stated Howe.

Avedian continued, "Our physicians are so busy. There is a value to electronic documentation, and there is a point where they need a transcription service. They don't want a system to add more time to the documentation process."

Enterprise-Wide Improvements

Today, eScription software is processing dictations from almost 1,000 clinicians at Maine Medical Center with over 85% of the work being edited versus traditionally transcribed.

The solution has organization-wide application and supports numerous specialties and work types. "We are processing more than 60 work types for over 15 different locations and customer/business entities across the Medical Center. This ranges from the traditional inpatient hospital reports, to our psychiatric facility, to all our clinics, and recently to our physician office practices," commented Avedian.

In addition, with CAMT, the organization has been able to centralize all outpatient transcription across the system and the document quality has remained as good as, or better than, under the previous systems. Turnaround time is improved. Furthermore, overflow management has improved through an automated reporting feature that indicates when the MTSO should log-in and begin to work.

Easy-to-use Interface for MTs

In-house and outsourced MTs have been trained on the eScription transcription product, which provides an MT interface based on Microsoft Word®. A variety of productivity features, such as shortcut keys and audio controls, facilitate the editing process. "The system is easy to use, functional in design, and requires relatively little training before an employee is productive," said Howe, who is also a past president of the American Association for Medical Transcription (AAMT), currently the Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity (AHDl).

The eScription web-based solution eliminated software purchases and let the organization replace on-site staff with more remote MTs. In a survey of MTs post-implementation, the majority of respondents said that they would never want to go back to 'the old way.'

"Our cost-savings model involved reducing the use of outsourced MTs for overflow work as our internal MT staff became increasingly productive," stated Avedian.

“eScription is a great example of how leading edge speech recognition technology can be utilized to drive down cost and improve quality of service. It is entirely transparent to our clinicians.”

—Barry Blumenfeld, MD, CIO

“Our MTs now prefer editing, both because it is less straining physically and because it values MTs’ medical language knowledge more than their typing. Our success is about the willingness of our MT staff to embrace the technology and continue to work with it to become more productive.”

More Reliable and Faster Distribution

The flexible document distribution capabilities of the eScription software enable faster response times when discharging or transferring patients, and free up Transcription Coordinators from overseeing routine distribution requests. For example, records are now automatically faxed to out-of-state clinicians, or printed directly to the patient’s floor, without manual intervention. Of the 1,000 faxes that were sent daily through the previous system, as many as 200-300 would result in errors and have to be resent. With eScription software, the reliability of fax distribution has improved by 90 percent.

Comprehensive Customer Service & Training

An eScription Installation Team helped Maine Medical “hit the ground running” by defining interfaces and document distribution rules, and by addressing the hospital’s formatting requirements right from the start. In addition, the eScription team provided on-site training for MTs to accelerate the productivity gains they could achieve.

The CAMT solution is dynamically integrated with Maine Medical Center’s existing medical information systems

Challenge: Maine Medical Center needed to address increasing demand for transcription services while controlling costs.

Solution: Maine Medical executives elected to implement the eScription on-demand platform for computer aided medical transcription (CAMT), a solution based on the premise that it’s faster to edit than to type. Rather than following a traditional transcription process, powerful background speech recognition software turns clinicians’ dictations into accurate, fully formatted draft documents that MTs quickly review and edit, often doubling productivity.

Results: Since its implementation, the eScription solution has doubled MT productivity, saved the healthcare organization over \$2 million in transcription costs, and streamlined the transcription workflow and distribution process.

through secure, standards-based interfaces. “The eScription team was very responsive to our requests. They understand the hospital environment and worked with us as partners to reach our goals,” added Avedian.

Million Dollar Success

Each year, the eScription Million Dollar Savings Award is presented to healthcare provider organizations that demonstrate savings of at least one million dollars or that reach a new level of million dollar savings using this on-demand CAMT solution. In 2008, Maine Medical Center was recognized for saving over \$2 million since adopting the eScription platform.

According to Chief Information Officer Barry Blumenfeld, MD, “eScription is a great example of how leading edge speech recognition technology can be utilized to drive down cost and improve quality of service. It is entirely transparent to our clinicians. They just know that their transcribed documents are coming back correct and faster than before.”

For product information please visit Nuance Healthcare at www.nuance.com/healthcare or call 888-350-4836.

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