

Case Study – Iris Biometrics for Patient Identification

Increasing patient safety, eliminating duplicates, and preventing fraud and ID theft at Novant Health

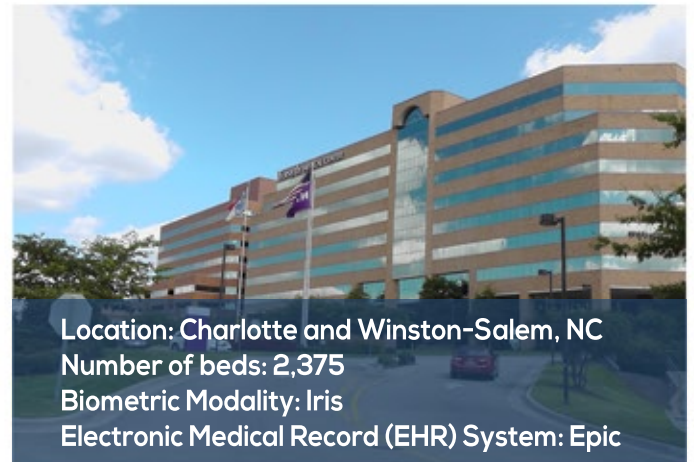
Background

Novant Health is a not-for-profit integrated system of 14 medical centers and a medical group consisting of 1,123 physicians in 343 clinic locations as well as numerous outpatient surgery centers, medical plazas, rehabilitation programs, diagnostic imaging centers and community health outreach programs. Novant's 24,000 employees and physician partners care for patients and communities in North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Novant Health employees and physician partners strive every day to bring their mission, vision and values to life. They demonstrate this commitment to their patients in a variety of ways including: maintaining an active community health outreach program, demonstrated superior outcomes for many health conditions indicated by state and national quality scores, creating innovative programs that address important health issues, and focusing on patient safety as one of the most important initiatives at Novant.

Challenge

Patient safety is one of the most important initiatives at Novant. Just like many other major healthcare institutions, the volume and diversity of patients seen at their facilities made it difficult to rely on traditional protocols to ensure patient identification accuracy. Patient misidentification was leading to duplicate medical records and overlays, healthcare fraud at the point of service, difficulties with cultural naming conventions, increased risk for the facility and a decline in overall patient safety.



Novant's challenge was to identify a safe and affordable patient identification technology solution that would create a unique identifier linked to a patient's medical record helping eliminate duplicate medical records, overlays, and patient fraud. The user-friendly solution needed to seamlessly run within their electronic health record (EHR) system, require minimal IT staff full time equivalents (FTEs) to implement, work quickly and accurately to ensure smooth patient flow, and require no patient contact to maintain a safe and hygienic healthcare environment.

Since Novant also saw its share of unconscious, disoriented, and urgent care patients, they additionally sought a patient identification solution that could easily be leveraged to work seamlessly in a mobile environment to identify patients from a smart device or mobile tablet.

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Solution

After carefully evaluating several biometric patient identification technologies, including the use of palm vein biometrics, Novant chose to deploy the RightPatient® patient identification solution in all of their hospitals using iris biometrics to protect patients from the negative consequences of duplicate medical records and overlays plus provide the hospital with the opportunity to easily and affordably scale up the deployment to deliver fast, accurate searches across Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) and Integrated Delivery Networks (IDNs).

Benefits

Following the seamless integration of the RightPatient® iris patient identification solution in late July 2013 at eight of their hospitals, the technology has been warmly accepted by patients who understand its purpose to protect their medical identity and help ensure their safety throughout the care continuum. RightPatient® has quickly streamlined the patient registration process and significantly increased identification accuracy.

Novant identified the following distinguishing characteristics of RightPatient® as integral to their implementation decision:

- The ability to prevent all duplicate and overlay medical records at the time of enrollment
- Protecting patients from healthcare fraud and medical identity theft at the point of care
- No patient contact with an iris camera rendering a much more hygienic solution in a hospital environment
- The ability to display a patient's digital photo during enrollment, check-in, and at every patient care touch point providing a multi-factor authentication mechanism
- A seamless interface with their existing Epic EHR, requiring minimal internal IT full time equivalents (FTEs) - the system was up and running in less than one week
- Positive staff acceptability, minimal training required before launch
- Patient acceptance of the technology as a tool to protect their identity and ensure they receive accurate care
- Iris biometrics has been independently tested and certified rendering it a standardized data format to confidently share clean data across North Carolina's Health Information Exchange (HIE)
- Overcoming problems identifying patients due to cultural naming conventions

RightPatient® has proven to be a smart choice by Novant Health as they continue to capitalize on the distinct advantages it offers to increase patient safety through accurate identification.