

Teamwork Was the Key to Success



Migrating to PC & Gaining Automatic Deficiency Completion in the Process

St. Clair Hospital is an independent community hospital that provides comprehensive, high quality care to the residents of Southwestern Pennsylvania. St. Clair has been a Meta client since 1985. The following article describes their migration from mainframe to PC, and the opportunity it offered to further automate HIM processes and dramatically improve department efficiency. The article was written by Eve-Ellen Mandler, St. Clair's Director of HIM and Privacy Officer, and Victoria Spieler, Assistant Director.

When the mainframe Health Information Management software we had been using since 1985 was sunset, we saw it as a golden opportunity. Just moving up to the improved technology of 21st century solutions would be a benefit in itself, but we wanted more — more functionality, more efficiency and better integration. With that motivation in mind and money in the budget, we went shopping.

Review & evaluate

The standard maintenance policy of our existing mainframe vendor, Meta Health Technology, included free upgrade to their PC products for each of the mainframe modules we had licensed from them. That's an offer that is hard to refuse under any circumstances, but it is especially so in today's healthcare environment where resources are usually limited. However, since we had both the chance to overhaul our software infrastructure (a very rare occurrence) and the money to do so (even rarer), we decided to open up our search to all HIM vendors in the marketplace.

Our team conducted an exhaustive examination of the available software products, and we looked at demo after demo. In the end, it was

clear that Meta had the best suite of software solutions. Moreover, they were willing to work with us to interface to all our appropriate hospital systems so we could achieve the automation, integration and communication we were looking for.

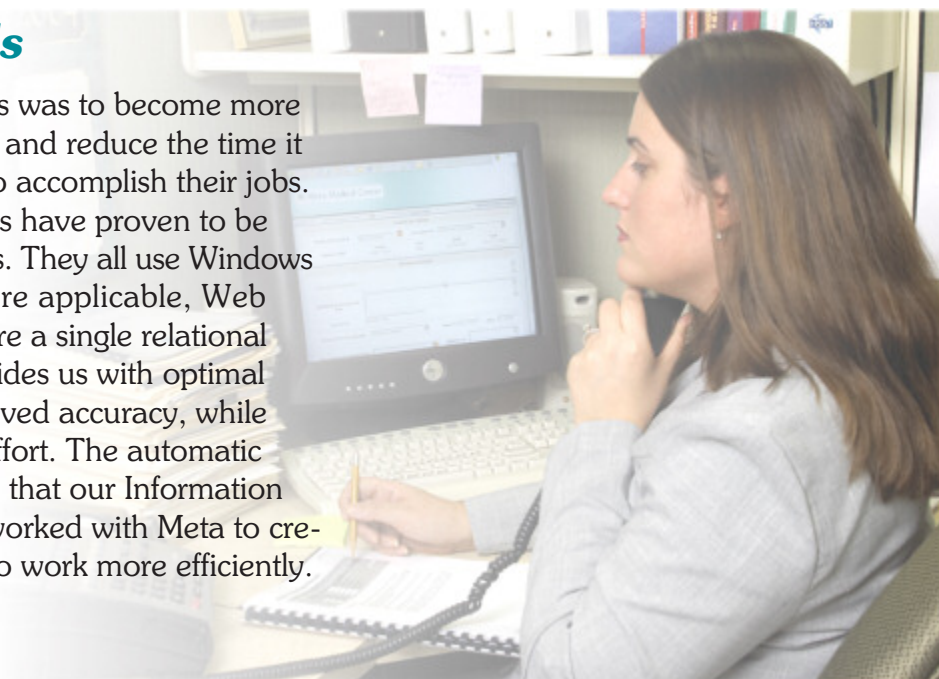
Migrate & upgrade

We exchanged our mainframe applications (abstracting, chart tracking and deficiency monitoring) for their CHARMS 2000 counterparts (*PowerAbstract*, *PowerTrac* and *PowerMonitor*, respectively). In addition, we licensed *PowerRelease* for managing correspondence and *PowerMonitor Plus* for automating deficiency assignment and completion.

The more we saw of the functionality we would be gaining, the more eager we became to make the switch. Our staff committed to a very ambitious and expeditious timeline, developed through careful, detailed planning with Meta's project manager. Meta worked with us every step of the way to accomplish our aim: a successful implementation that was both on time and on budget.

Meeting our goals

One of our main goals was to become more operationally efficient and reduce the time it takes staff members to accomplish their jobs. Meta's PC applications have proven to be effective in these areas. They all use Windows technology and, where applicable, Web technology. They share a single relational database, which provides us with optimal integration and improved accuracy, while reducing data entry effort. The automatic information interfaces that our Information Systems (IS) people worked with Meta to create have enabled us to work more efficiently.



Abstracting

Because our abstracting activities now take place on PCs, our remote coders have access to a large number of coding references that were not available to them in the mainframe environment. *PowerAbstract* integrates with our encoding software, so the reference materials are easily accessible whenever



the coder needs them. As a result, our remote coders have increased both their accuracy and their productivity. (Note: Our remote coders connect via either VPN or Terminal Services. The process works smoothly.)

Access to information

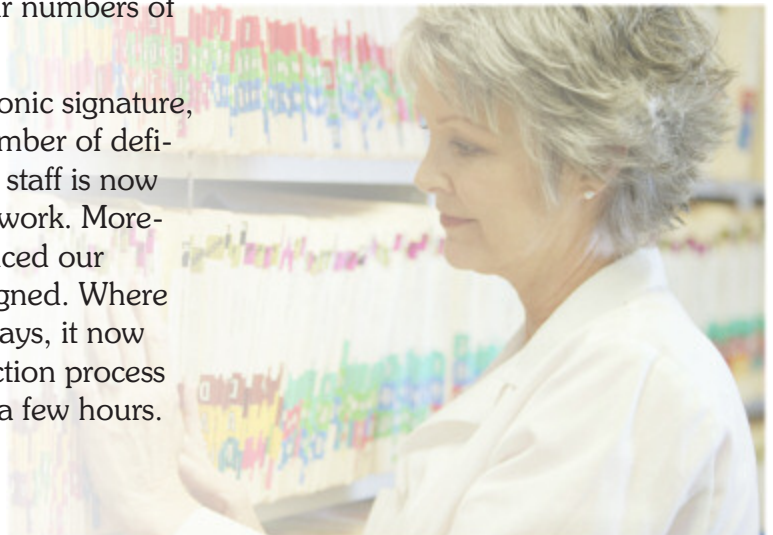
Our access to information has also improved. We have greatly reduced our demands on IS staff since our data is now stored on departmental servers and PCs. Using the comprehensive reporting capabilities integrated into the software, we can

produce any report we need. That frees IS resources for other tasks, while providing HIM staff with quicker access to information. IS staff are also happy that they no longer have to do manual backups — a labor-intensive chore — as that task is handled automatically.

Deficiencies & completion

PowerMonitor, Meta's record deficiency product, enables us to collect, review and fully report our HIM deficiencies with only a few mouseclicks. With its built-in flexibility, we were easily able to customize the software to meet our specific requirements. However, we wanted to automate the deficiency process to the greatest extent possible, so we implemented PowerMonitor Plus as well. Our IS staff worked closely with Meta to develop interfaces to our dictation, transcription and other hospital systems (e.g., an electronic signature authentication program) so that in most cases, we can complete chart deficiencies automatically and electronically, with no manual intervention. This automation alone has resulted in the ability to handle an increased workload with the same number of staff, while decreasing our numbers of incomplete records.

Using PowerMonitor Plus and electronic signature, we have been able to reduce the number of deficient charts from 13,000 to 700. My staff is now free to focus on other departmental work. Moreover, we have also significantly reduced our turnaround time for getting charts signed. Where turnaround had been seven to ten days, it now averages just two days, and the sanction process has been reduced from two days to a few hours.



Correspondence

In the correspondence area, our requests for Release of Information (ROI) have been growing rapidly, so we needed to improve our ability to respond. Plus, we wanted to use a more professional approach in our fulfillment. Here again, the new solution has proven to be effective. Our ROI requests increased by 45% in just two years. Using PowerRelease, we are able to handle the increased load with the same number of staff while decreasing out TAT (turnaround time) from 10 days to an average of 5 days.

Result: Success

All in all, our golden opportunity has been a big success. Thanks to our staff's commitment, careful planning and hard work, combined with Meta's excellent collaboration and support, we have met our goals handsomely. More importantly, we feel we have the foundation and the tools that will enable us to continue to improve as we go forward.

For more information...

Contact Meta at 800.334.6840
or go to our website
www.metahealth.com.



META

Meta Health Technology
330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001
800.334.6840
www.metahealth.com