Enhanced Imaging Experience

Through a number of initiatives in recent years, WellSpan Health has worked to increase efficiencies and improve the overall experience for our patients and providers. In Imaging Services, one of the primary areas of focus has been to improve the access to care in both York and Adams counties.

For outpatient exams, Imaging Services strives to maintain a goal of providing an appointment within 5 days of the request for service.

According to Ron Bernardi, Director of Imaging at York Hospital, “To meet this goal, we have provided more convenient locations and times for patients to have their appointments, and we have expanded our calling hours for scheduling.”

 Imaging at Gettysburg Hospital has also expanded scheduling hours. The goal of scheduling within 5 days has been very positive for patients and providers said Chuck Kyle, Director of Imaging at Gettysburg Hospital.

If the patient chooses to register for the exam online, he/she should visit the Patient Education section of wellspan.org. There a patient can find information about the exam including what to expect.

Being prepared for an imaging study is crucial for a positive patient experience. Preparation goes beyond having blood work or fasting for a procedure. Dave Dill, physician liaison for WellSpan, explains. “If an order is written incorrectly by the provider, the patient may come in and not realize they need a different type of test. My job is to eliminate and avoid these errors.”

In his role, Dill works to build relationships with providers who work with WellSpan. “I’m available to anyone who needs help, needs a question answered, or information transferred in a timelier manner.”

The implementation of electronic medical records being used within the health system also helps to provide information to both Imaging Services and the providers. The Imaging Department can find pertinent medical information in the health record and the provider can access the patients’ digital exam images and the radiologist’s findings after a procedure is completed.

Not all improvements within Imaging Services have been about processes. One of the most significant changes...
in how care is delivered has been the completion of renovations to the York Hospital Imaging department.

These renovations have increased patient privacy and comfort. They also included the installation of new digital x-ray equipment which completes the department’s conversion to all digital imaging.

A patient experience at the York Hospital Imaging department now has the same ‘feel’ as an experience in an ambulatory setting. No matter where you go for Imaging Services in Adams or York Counties, the goal is complete patient satisfaction.

Pre-certification Process Made Easier

The pre-certification process – it can be the bane of patients and providers alike when it comes to imaging studies. When not done or done incorrectly, time and resources are wasted and patients are inconvenienced.

In the past, providers have been responsible for obtaining pre-certification for patients when an imaging study is ordered. This often took staff time that could be better spent elsewhere. Today, however, the pre-certification process is increasingly being facilitated by WellSpan Health.

“We are now responsible for obtaining pre-certifications for 30 of the 62 WellSpan Medical Group Practices,” says Jennifer Eppley, a supervisor in the WellSpan Insurance Specialty Center. “That means we get the authorization and pre-certification before the patient is scheduled for a study. Future plans include extending this service to non-WellSpan practices.”

Under this initiative, an imaging procedure is not scheduled for the patient until it has been pre-certified. This has largely eliminated situations where patients show up for their scheduled test and are not able to receive it.

According to Eppley, having WellSpan pre-certify the imaging procedure for patients has received a very positive response from providers.

“Since we now handle the pre-certification process, providers are able to focus more on treating patients and customer service,” she says.

Patients also benefit from this new process because they know that before they go to their scheduled imaging procedure they have been authorized and will not have to worry about rescheduling their appointment because pre-certification was not obtained.

Another benefit of the pre-certification enhancements is that as insurance companies change their parameters as to what requires authorization, WellSpan is able to communicate that information rapidly to staff and not have it negatively impact the practice. In the past, this information often took weeks to “trickle down” to the practices.

Long term, Eppley says that her department is working to set up a phone number for patients and providers to call if they have questions about pre-certification.

WellSpan’s pre-certification initiative is currently in place at both Gettysburg and York Hospitals and will eventually cover all 62 WellSpan Medical Group Practices.

Are you interested in receiving more information about WellSpan Imaging? Would it be helpful to have a radiologist or member of imaging administration speak at a Lunch & Learn session at your practice?

For additional information or to schedule a meeting, please contact Ann Schleig at (717) 812-5215 or aschleig@wellspan.org.
New Software Produces High-Quality Images, Uses Less Radiation

When it comes to imaging studies, physicians have long been encouraged to follow the ALARA principle – As Low As Reasonably Achievable. Put simply, use the minimum dose of radiation required to obtain necessary images.

At WellSpan Health, new radiation-saving software called iDose will soon allow for a significantly reduced radiation dose without compromising high-quality CT images and rapid reconstruction.

"With iDose, we will be able to reduce the amount of radiation required by 30 to 50 percent in most cases," says Jean Gresick-Schugsta, radiation safety officer and chief diagnostic physicist at York Hospital. She and two other full-time diagnostic physicists work with staff to keep patient radiation exposure to an absolute minimum.

In the past, obtaining a better image often meant exposing a patient to a higher dose of radiation. The iDose iterative reconstruction technique uses advanced reconstruction algorithms to enable equivalent image quality at a fraction of the dose, overcoming the inherent challenges of low-dose scanning, such as noisy images and image artifacts.

Radiation from CT scans has been a growing public concern. One 2007 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine stated that up to two percent of all cancers in the United States may be caused by radiation from CT scans. While these findings have been disputed, most agree that it is best to use the lowest dose of radiation possible.

"The amount of radiation a patient receives during a CT scan has become an issue in recent years and patients are asking their providers about it," says Paul McClain, imaging operations team leader at York Hospital and the York Hospital Imaging Center at Apple Hill. "But CT scans have great diagnostic value, so manufacturers are continually working to develop better ways of producing high-quality images using less radiation."

Gresick-Schugsta says that patients won’t notice the decreased radiation, but providers will notice the quality images being produced.

"Ultimately, we are exposing people to less radiation, which is a benefit to everyone," she says. "In the future, there will most likely be a system in place that lets patients know how much radiation they have received."

Gresick-Schugsta says that WellSpan’s CT dose reduction committee has been reviewing CT scan protocols and eliminating any unnecessary radiation. The installation of iDose is just the latest step WellSpan has taken to improve image quality while putting patient safety first.

"A CT scan gives off about 10 times more radiation than a regular X-ray, but the information it provides is about 100 times better," she says. "That’s why it’s important for us to continue increasing the safety of this very important imaging tool."
WellSpan Imaging Center features Open MRI

Offers the standard for image quality and patient comfort

About a year ago, the WellSpan Imaging Center on the Apple Hill Health Campus in York expanded its imaging capabilities when it added an open Magnetic Resonance Imaging machine (MRI).

Barbara Noll, imaging operations MRI team leader, said "it was becoming essential to provide a scanner that would accommodate various patient conditions and fulfill the needs of our community."

The Hitachi Oasis™ has an accommodating design that reassures patients, as well as a broad range of clinical capabilities and features to meet the demand of today’s diagnostic imaging professionals. This design includes a 270 degree, unobstructed view for the patient.

“The openness allows the patient to have a friend or family member nearby during the exam for further reassurance," said Noll.

“This minimizes anxiety and claustrophobia which provides a more pleasant experience for the patient during the MRI exam.”

The open design of Oasis provides the highest level patient accommodation and acceptance for:

- Pediatric patients
- Elderly patients
- Infirm patients

Patient comfort is one half of the equation. This Open MRI also delivers on the other half, image quality and clarity.

Oasis combines unparalleled patient comfort with powerful technology and an ultra fast workstation to make patient exams as quick and smooth as possible.

Its imaging power is further boosted by an array of anatomically specific, optimized receiver coils that allow advanced imaging applications ranging from vascular to orthopedic to women’s health.

Patients in some specialties may benefit more than others from having an open MRI. For example, Noll states that orthopedic patients benefit greatly from the ability to move the table laterally, which places the joint or extremity in the center of the magnet.

“Conventional MRI scanners are limited to performing high quality orthopedic exams due to the restricted space inside the gantry and patient discomfort.”

For more information on WellSpan’s Open MRI, watch a video or call (717) 812-3700.
Meet Neuroradiologist Larry Moss, M.D.

As a diagnostic neuroradiologist, Larry Moss, M.D., says that he is often invisible to patients. But he’s fine with that.

“Patients may never know I exist,” he says, “but oftentimes I’m the first person to identify a problem and make a diagnosis. That is where radiologists excel – at making that first critical diagnosis … something that is required if proper treatment is to be provided.”

A native of Maine, Moss jokes that he came to WellSpan after embarking on a “slow migration south.”

“I grew up in Portland, Maine, did my undergraduate work at Brandeis University in Massachusetts and then attended medical school at Tufts University,” he says. “Following graduation, I completed a radiology residency at Mass General and a neuroimaging fellowship at Yale-New Haven in Connecticut.”

Moss says he was attracted to medicine, and the field of radiology in particular, because of the science involved.

“I found the science and engineering behind how an image was generated to be fascinating,” he says. “Medicine also provided a way for me to help people.”

Following his fellowship, Moss worked for American Radiology in Baltimore. While there, he became involved in orthopedic imaging and did some work with the NFL’s Baltimore Ravens.

In 2009, he joined WellSpan and was later named section head of neuroradiology. In this position, he splits his time between York Hospital and the WellSpan Imaging Center at Apple Hill. His move to York was prompted by feedback he received from several former colleagues who had left Baltimore to work for WellSpan.

“They told me that WellSpan had a very cohesive environment and that it was a very enjoyable place to work,” he says. “Once I got here I quickly discovered that the physicians here work well together, the hospital has excellent facilities and technology, and there is dynamic leadership.”

At WellSpan, Moss largely serves in a diagnostic role, working closely with a wide variety of specialists to read and interpret images. While he doesn’t have much direct patient interaction, he says that the relationship he enjoys with other specialists is stimulating and educational.

“I spend the majority of my day reviewing patient images and consulting with referring physicians – oftentimes neurologists or neurosurgeons,” he says. “I also get to see trauma patients and work to make critical findings so that they can be treated quickly.”

In addition to a diverse daily routine, Moss enjoys the opportunity to work with the latest imaging technology.

“I really appreciate the technology here at WellSpan,” he says. “The health system is up-to-date on the latest and most advanced software and equipment. We use 3T high-field MRI that creates beautifully clear images while emitting lower doses of radiation. To this day, some of the big hospitals in Baltimore don’t have this technology.”

Moss says that the collaboration between departments and physicians at WellSpan makes it an enjoyable – and effective – place to work.

“The radiologists here are regularly included in conferences with orthopedics, oncology, pulmonary and other departments and are considered an active part of the patient care team. This dramatically enhances our ability to do our jobs because we receive a lot of feedback from the specialists.”

As he looks to the future, Moss seems comfortable with not continuing his southern migration.

“The entire imaging department at WellSpan works extremely well together,” he says. “We have people who do amazing things here – both from a diagnostic standpoint and an interventional one as well.

“In contrast to many of the places I’ve worked, the radiologists at WellSpan are very accessible to referring physicians and welcome the input and feedback on our work. We truly work as a team and everyone’s goal is to do what’s best for the patient.”