



## MERCY HEALTH PARTNERS

**SITUATION:** Mercy Health Partners, a multi-hospital healthcare system in Northwest Ohio, wanted to shift from a paper-based medical records system to the digital age. It also set out to cut costs and improve efficiencies associated with existing paper files to be stored and managed for decades to come.

**MULTIPLE STORAGE ISSUES:** Mercy's three hospitals in the Toledo area serve some 250,000 people per year. It faced multiple medical records storage issues

- Voluminous paperwork: In 2006, it had some 500,000 linear inches of files.
- EDMS migration: Plans called for migration to an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) beginning midyear 2007.
- Paper file retention: Files had to be managed cost-effectively during standard retention periods, which were 20 years for pediatric patients and 10 years for adults.
- Disparate storage: Mercy stored records at seven sites, creating lengthy turnaround times for locating, shipping and delivering records.
- Rising costs: A third-party vendor notified Mercy that its annual service fees for offsite storage would increase by 500 percent

**STORAGE SOLUTION:** The healthcare provider opted to build and operate its own Centralized Document Management Center (CDMC) vs. outsourced record storage or filming solutions.

Active records are stored in an eight-tier Eclipse Powered System™. Inactive records are stored in a 10-tier mechanical-assist HDMS unit. Forty years of financial records, totaling approximately 10,000 boxes, are stored in a third Spacesaver HDMS system and static shelving layout.

The project also left room for an additional 4,400 linear feet of records that were not included in the original plan. In addition, a mezzanine was added to hold 3,000 linear feet of business records.

Central Business Group's Professional Services Division handled the transfer and move of all financial and medical records. It included the creation of a database and printed bar code labels for each of the 10,000 boxes.

The CBG system allows electronic requests for boxed records throughout the Toledo Mercy Hospital system. It also provides an automated detailed retention schedule for the financial boxes and provides audit trails and location guides to enhance box management. Retention schedules help allow on-time destruction of financial records.

## MERCY HEALTH PARTNERS (Continued)

**STORAGE SOLVED:** The strategic storage solution provides a number of tangible benefits. Specifically:

- Retrieval of records is faster and easier.
- Mercy now has space to implement the EDMS with all records management – electronic and paper-based – on one site.
- It costs approximately 40 percent less per year to operate the CDMC versus the cost for an off-site, turnkey document management vendor.
- Former records storage areas can be converted to patient care functions.
- The empty warehouses in Toledo can be sold or converted to other uses.

Finally, Mercy was able to merge its health information management staffs from the three hospitals. Yet it did so without the need to increase staff, even though the volume of records reached over a million. Efficiency in finding records has also increased significantly – and information management employee morale is up.



It's estimated that the Eclipse storage system, which has increased retrieval time by 20 percent, will pay back its incremental cost within 2.5 years through higher staff efficiency – along with the eventual implementation of the EDMS solution and the centralization of paper medical records.