

Transforming HIM Departments—Maximizing Productivity

The transcription workflow in many facilities is done using yesterday's technology, and requires constant manual efforts. What is needed is a new thinking in how to reengineer the transcription process, and successfully use new, innovative, relational database technology to make quantum leaps in productivity.

Delivering the right care to the right patient at the right time in the right way is a historical challenge faced by healthcare facilities worldwide. Timely and accurate access to clinical documentation plays a key role in delivering quality patient care. For most medical facilities today, creating and managing medical information is a complicated, expensive, and time-consuming process. Adding to this enormous challenge is an increased demand for more clinical documentation, stricter documentation requirements, slow speed and limited availability of word processing features in MEDITECH and other legacy HIS systems, inability of software add-ons to successfully integrate with these legacy systems, tighter budgets, high turnover rate of transcriptionists, and the pressure to have faster turnaround time for quicker access to clinical documentation. The technology that exists in the marketplace to help alleviate these challenges occasionally is not user-friendly, does not allow add-ons, and is not adaptable to the changing needs of an organization. The answer to all these challenges faced by healthcare management is in Processware, technology that replaces manual functions with automation, and takes the decision-making out of repetitive tasks. Processware technology in the area of medical transcription is a set of software designed to automate all peripheral tasks in medical transcription. When designed using the power of relational database technology, it allows for transcript creation, management reporting, integration to HIS, distribution and delivery of documents so medical facilities can achieve maximum productivity potential.

Table 1: Challenges faced by Medical facilities in the area of Clinical Document Creation/Management:

Challenges Faced by Healthcare Management

- ◆ High cost for transcription services
- ◆ Increased demand for more clinical documentation
- ◆ Stricter documentation requirements
- ◆ Slow speed and limited availability of word processing features in Legacy HIS systems
- ◆ Inability of successful integration to HIS systems by software add-ons
- ◆ Tighter budgets
- ◆ High turnover rate of transcriptionists
- ◆ Pressure to have faster turnaround time for quicker access to clinical documentation

Processware technology can provide a total solution for the entire transcription workflow to HIM departments of medical facilities. What if workflow automation can integrate transcription services for all HIS applications such as HIM, RAD, PATH and CARD in one system, maintaining and automating each department's special report layouts and report

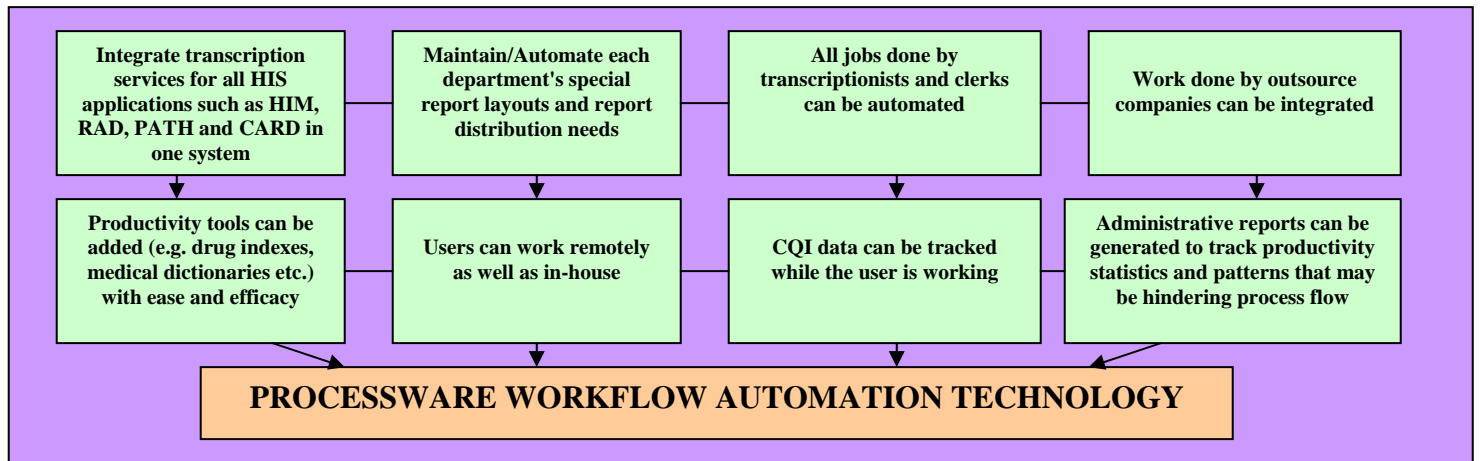
distribution needs? What if using this intelligent technology, all jobs done by transcriptionists and clerks can be automated, and work done by outsource companies can be completely integrated? What if productivity tools such as PRDs, medical dictionaries, spell-checkers, drug indexes, Flash Forward and so forth can be added to the current system with ease and efficacy? What if CQI data can be tracked while the user is working? What if users can work remotely as well as in-house? What if administrative reports can be generated to track productivity statistics and patterns that may be hindering process flow? All this and more is possible with workflow automation software in the medical transcription arena, along with a seamless integration with MEDITECH.

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Following is how St. Mary's Hospital and Medical Center in Grand Junction, CO has deployed Processware technology to reap great benefits in the area of clinical information/documentation management. The medical facility was facing challenges in the area of workflow automation as many manual interventions were slowing down the transcription workflow. As Elaine Barnett, Director, Health Records Information System states, "We needed quick response with minimal downtime." Ease and speed of access to clinical documentation, and the growing pressures to send transcriptionists home to work remotely were other business challenges faced by SMHMC. In March of 1997, SMHMC adopted process automation technology (TSG's Transcriptor™) for medical records and Radiology transcription. Using this technology, the process of document creation was completely automated for the users (both in-house and remote), with built-in templates, headers/footers, and canned text to speed up the process of document creation. The technology allowed users to create headers/footers, shells/templates/forms, signature blocks/trailers, and canned text by report type, physician, patient location and/or department/facility for maximum productivity gains.

"Quick turnaround time, immediate access to reports, cost savings, productivity improvements, improved quality of transcripts, physician satisfaction, ability to send transcriptionists home, reporting/tracking productivity tools and transcription satisfaction are all great benefits of process automation," Elaine Barnett, Director of Health Records Information System at St. Mary's Hospital and Medical Center.

Figure 1: Following is what Processware Technology of Transcriptor™ can achieve in the area of Medical Transcription:



Other benefits of Transcriptor™ experienced by SMHMC were in the area of Radiology transcription where users were able to associate multiple exams to a report. Moreover, the process of changing exam status from 'Order' to 'Taken' was automated, eliminating errors and time delays caused by Radiology technicians who occasionally forgot to change the status, halting transcriptionists from transcribing clinical reports which were crucial for delivery of patient care by the providers (physicians/radiologists). This significantly increased physician satisfaction at SMHMC as they now had quick and consistent access to clinical reports, and they no longer had to spend valuable time calling transcriptionists to track down patient reports. Users were also able to transfer result and follow-up codes to MEDITECH, and were prompted with reminders to fill in missing follow-up codes and other information as specified by management. "Quick turnaround time, immediate access to reports, cost savings, productivity improvements, improved quality of transcripts, physician satisfaction, ability to send transcriptionists home, reporting/tracking productivity tools and transcription satisfaction are all great benefits of Transcriptor," states Elaine Barnett, Director of Health Records Information System. Additional benefits of Transcriptor™ included the ability of SMHMC transcriptionists to "flag" patient exams for QA lists, a functionality greatly valued by the Radiology department at SMHMC.

Processware technology in the area of clinical documentation management has a great impact in the overall goal for Computerized Patient Records (CPR) for an Integrated Health Delivery System (IHDS). It allows for inexpensive archiving for historical query and analysis, audit trails that meet HIPAA requirements, and the generation of reports by simple point and click. The ability of Transcriptor's relational database to produce administrative reports is invaluable for the HIM department. The administrative reports can track word/line/character counts to improve the productivity of transcriptionists. Additional reports provided by Transcriptor™ include billing reports to manage work done for physician offices and payroll reports to compare staff productivity. With Relational Database technology, management and users (including providers) can also benefit from automated reporting features to determine if Discharge

Summaries/Operative Reports are completed on time and if not how delinquent these are, to run productivity logs and filter them by user/time frame/report types, to determine if H&Ps are completed for inpatients within 24 hours of admissions and so forth.

In the area of making accurate clinical documentation accessible at all times, Transcriptor's Processware technology can completely automate the distribution and routing of clinical reports. Intelligent and logic-based rules can be designed to print patient reports at patient location and at pre-defined locations based on report type and/or physician, to process all carbon copies (cc) and distribute via print/fax/email as appropriate, to print/fax/email reports based on transcriptionist's request, to automate envelope printing for patient letters/reports/business communications, and to distribute reports using pre-defined rules via real-time or batch processing (based on time of day/day of week). Reports can also be printed in terminal digit order, or printed to multiple bins to automate the report sorting needs for most efficient filing. The printing/routing rules can be designed to exclude recipients from the distribution group if they do not want to receive the reports and to send a single copy to multiple recipients in the same clinic.

Transcriptor's workflow automation technology can also enable physicians to electronically review and sign the patient reports by making the whole process online. With a simple login and a click of a button, physicians can view and edit transcribed reports, and fill in missing details as tagged by the transcriptionist in the report. The system can automate the process of changing the status of 'Signed' reports to 'Draft' (when authorized to do so), thereby allowing transcriptionists to incorporate major edits and further dictation into transcribed reports, as delineated by the physician upon review of these reports on-line. Being able to edit documents on-line significantly reduces the turnaround time for completing clinical documentation, and results in a faster and more accurate CPR. An audit trail can also be inserted to show the amount of time physicians spend in reviewing documents before signing, a very important tool in ensuring quality patient care.

"For our radiologists, electronically signing reports on-line using Transcriptor is very effective," Cheryl Barley, Radiology Department, St. Mary's Hospital and Medical Center, Grand Junction, CO, using Processware automation technology for a number of years.

Transcriptor™ also seamlessly integrates with MEDITECH and other HIS applications to automate the manual task of flagging chart deficiencies as related to when a report is dictated, when a report is transcribed, and when a report is signed. Finally, Transcriptor's process automation can lead to significant productivity gains when relational database technology, coupled with process automation workflow, can integrate dictation systems with transcription systems so that with a mere entry of a job number, all patient-related data is automatically made available in the transcription system, allowing transcriptionists to bypass the repetitive task of reentering this information while creating clinical documentation. Process automation that leads to an accurate CPR and significant productivity gains in the medical transcription arena is no longer a dream. It is a reality!

The importance of clinical document creation and management is undeniable in today's managed care environment, where the emphasis is on lowering costs and increasing quality of patient care. The process of generating timely and accurate clinical documentation, which is crucial for delivering quality patient care, should be automated as much as possible to eliminate all non-value adding tasks. Processware workflow automation technology is essential to achieve this goal in a cost-effective manner. Healthcare organizations using this technology can benefit by significant financial savings due to highly productive transcription workflow, which automates all processes to consistently produce target results. It is no wonder that more and more healthcare organizations are adopting Processware technology in their efforts to deliver high quality patient care, and to support CPR towards an integrated health delivery system (IHDS).

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