*Mercy Health implemented DocuWare to improve patient care, respond to queries immediately and improve lab processes.*



**Mercy**
MEDICAL CENTER
DES MOINES

*A member of Mercy Health Network*

## Mona Dinnauer, Outreach Lab Manager for Mercy Catholic Health Initiatives/Mercy Health Network, Des Moines, IA

"DocuWare was easy to implement and a breeze to get up and running. Part of the reason we chose this system was because software support is readily available."

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| **Location:** | USA |
| **Industry:** | Healthcare |
| **Deployment:** | On-premises |
| **Department:** | Finance |
| **Integration:** | Kofax, Cerner (Mercy's electronic medical record and lab software) |

**Mercy Health Network, part of Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI), is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Colorado, operating hospitals and healthcare facilities across 18 states.**

Mercy Health Network wanted to rehaul processes at the Mercy Clinical Laboratory. The laboratory analyses over 1,800 samples a day from patients across 17 hospitals and 300 facilities. The lab contributes approximately $30 million to the hospital's annual revenue, so digitizing processes was a high priority.

### Minimal lag time from lab analysis to billing

The lab needed to speed up the processing time from when a specimen is received to the time it is billed.  During the period the lab was looking for a new system, it had $7-8 million in lab work waiting to be billed. The goal was multi-pronged: automate processes; reduce time-to-bill; streamline document sharing between patient access, medical coding and billing teams. Prior to DocuWare, staff would staple documents together, hand write the account number and manually alphabetize the lab reports for each day. Once all the documents were in order, the staples were removed so the documents could be scanned. This system was unsustainable and the files created were not easily searchable. When information was needed, staff often had to page through the entire day's

*"Our colleagues love the way they can find the information they need with the touch of one button, versus paging through a 5,000 page file."*

paper-trail, which could be more than 5,000 pages! These cumbersome  paper documents were then re-stapled and sent to the billing department where they would eventually be processed for payment.

### Digital transformation means lab orders are scanned & filed using barcoded labels

Today, specimens and lab orders are scanned in real time using barcoded labels to index the documents by a unique accession number. The lab utilizes third-party software Kofax to scan, index and run a Quality Assurance check on the documents, before moving them into DocuWare for access and storage. DocuWare is seamlessly integrated with Cerner, Mercy's electronic medical record and lab software. When an employee opens a patient record in Cerner, they simply click the integrated DocuWare button to access lab records and test results pertaining to that patient.

The system for managing lab orders worked so well that it was expanded to manage future or standing lab orders which are initially indexed by medical record number, a number unique for each patient and later tied to the accession number.

*"We have improved our time-to-bill rates, our cash flow and our customer service. Implementing electronic document management was definitely the right choice for Mercy Clinical Laboratory."*

## DocuWare's high functionality, 24/7 support and scalable setup were deciding factors

Implementing DocuWare also allowed the lab to easily share information with offsite coding staff using an internet connection and login credentials to access and share information with the staff in Des Moines.

## Enhanced patient care and customer service

To ease the transition, the lab operated with both the digital and paper systems simultaneously. However, the staff embraced the new system after only a few hands-on training sessions. Eliminating paper-based tasks freed the staff to provide better customer service to the hospitals, clinics and other clients.

The business impact of the DocuWare implemen-tation is readily apparent in the lab's improved cash flow, which is a result of increasing its billing capacity and reducing its time-to-bill by one day. Digitizing information and making it easily available from anywhere has improved patient care and customer service.

## No "man-handling" of documents thanks to centralized document storage

Not only was the lab able to improve its billing processes, it also gained a centralized document storage system and eliminated the manual handling of documents, which decreased errors and improved HIPAA compliance. Today, lab records can be shared with Mercy's IT system and are part of a patient's chart. Mercy's Revenue-Cycle team can also access the information and work to improve collection of patient service revenue and actively manage the patient account from creation to payment.

*"Having easy access to the original order improves the quality of the lab tests and eliminates confusion. We can now instantly answer a nurse or doctor's questions, improving patient care. This is one of the biggest benefits of our new system."*

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