

# Speeding up Dictation and Transcription

## Documentation Workflow Solutions Follow the Lead of Clinical Services at Self Regional Healthcare

by **Debra Robinson**, RHIA

**S**elf Regional Healthcare, in Greenwood, SC, serves as the referral hospital for the seven South Carolina counties known as the Lakelands. We provide advanced healthcare services to a population of more than 250,000 people, and our facilities include a heart center, cancer center, women's center, rehabilitation services, neurosurgery and neurology services, ambulatory care center, vascular services, bariatric services, pain management center, behavioral health services, imaging center, and endoscopy lab, among others.

Microsoft Word and relied on manual processes and couriers to deliver the reports to our physicians. Operative notes and discharge summaries often were backlogged four weeks or more, making it hard to keep our accounts receivable cycles to a reasonable length.

As our facility grew, we clearly needed faster report turnaround times. Our goals in seeking a new dictation and transcription solution were to have no turnaround times more than 12 hours and to "empty the bank" of backlogged reports.

### Managing Workflow

The clinical documentation workflow technology provides integrated voice (dictation) capture, transcription, and speech recognition in a Web-based, Internet-hosted model. In the first phase of our implementation, the digital voice capture and document workflow solution will introduce a front-end quality control process for improved efficiency.

With an enterprise view to easily manage users, documents and voice files from a single dashboard, and sophisticated configuration options, we will be able to track work and share resources in order to get the right document to the right transcriptionist at the right time. Later, we will deploy MedQuist's front-end speech recognition solution, SpeechQ, for our fast-paced radiology department.

Self Regional sought to keep turnaround times under 12 hours and "empty the bank" of backlogged reports.

We are five-star rated for clinical excellence in several surgical procedures, as well as overall vascular and gastrointestinal services, by HealthGrades, the nation's leading independent organization that rates hospitals across the country on specific procedures and patient outcomes.

To support this vast array of clinical services, Self Regional recently began implementing a technology suite of voice capture, transcription, and document workflow management solutions housewide. Back-end speech recognition will be the next step for us, followed by front-end technology for radiology in 2008.

### Moving away from Manual Processes

Self Regional had been using MedQuist's VoiceWriter dictation system since the mid-1980s, but we had never employed a transcription solution until now. We typed reports in

The user-friendliness of the technology we selected was important, but the main differentiator was the service to support it. We looked at the experiences of several other MedQuist customers in our region before making our decision. We had a six-page list of criteria that the vendor had to meet in order for us to even continue discussions. MedQuist met all the criteria. Their reputation as a very progressive company was even more enticing.

We received in-depth training prior to the implementation. We also found during the building of the system that everything was very straightforward, and MedQuist personnel have been very patient in explaining system operation details when we have questions. Most importantly, they were able to accommodate our policies on how such projects have to be done at Self Regional, so we didn't have to make any major process changes.

### Looking Ahead

This initiative will help us handle our increasing documentation workload and free up manpower by taking the burden of dealing with dictation away from our IT staff. And all of the previous manual transcription processes will now be eliminated. Reports will be going into our back-end electronic medical record right away, as soon as transcription is completed, instead of 48 hours later.

We expect that front-end speech recognition will further help us meet our aggressive goals. We look forward to continuing down the path of uninterrupted, secure information flow that we previously began with the electronic medical record and electronic charting. ♦

*Debra Robinson has been director of HIM at Self Regional Healthcare in Greenwood, SC, since 2000.*

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