

The image shows two women in an office setting. They are both wearing bright orange short-sleeved shirts. The woman on the right is sitting at a desk and using a computer mouse. The woman on the left is leaning in, looking at the computer screen. The computer monitor displays a medical scan, likely an MRI. In the background, there are other computer monitors and office equipment. The Philips logo is in the top left corner.

PHILIPS

BlueSeal helps to manage risk at Vida Imaging

Puerto Rico is a tropical island in the Caribbean that faces natural disasters like hurricanes that threaten infrastructure and safety around the country. When hurricane Maria hit the island in 2017, MR magnets around the country quenched without having helium refill capacity at hand, which meant clinics and patients were waiting to be scanned. Dr. Mayra Maldonado, founder of Vida Imaging, made the decision to make her next MRI system a BlueSeal magnet from Philips, a game-changer that seals the helium inside the scanner, allowing for safe shutdowns during emergency situations and a quick restart of imaging services after downtime. As climate changes brings more frequent storms, experts express the need to invest in resilient technologies like BlueSeal to ensure continued medical care for populations like Puerto Rico's.

As the global temperature continues to rise, experts predict an increased occurrence of natural disasters around the world. Higher water temperatures increase the intensity and frequency of oceanic weather events, which further increases the damage and impact on communities and economies in at-risk regions. Experts warn that as climate change continues we're going to see even more of these events.

These natural disasters have a profound and broad impact, disrupting essential services like electricity, healthcare and transportation. The immediate impact of storms is significant, but the long-term impact can be felt long after the TV cameras take off – treatment pathways disrupted by insufficient medical supplies, vital distribution networks that need to be rebuilt or reinforced.

"Now, with climate change, what we're seeing is that the waters are getting warmer and warm water is the fuel for this system to grow. So we're going to see more frequent storms."

Ernesto Morales



After seeing firsthand what kind of impact tropical storms can have on healthcare operations, Dr. Maldonado envisioned a top-tier imaging center that was designed to weather these storms and deliver critical care to her population. When researching possibilities for a magnetic resonance scanner, she quickly realized that only one solution could provide the required image quality while also granting operational protection from environmental risks. The operational risk cannot be understated, as multiple magnets on the island have quenched in the past and could not resume

scanning operations due to a lack of liquid helium. This left practices with idle machines, and patients waiting for important diagnostic scans.

It was imperative that Vida imaging protect itself and its patients from this risk, to ensure that imaging operations see as little downtime as possible in case of such an event. Sealing the helium in their MR scanner ensures that Vida is not dependent upon logistics networks for a helium refill, mitigating one aspect of operational risk that the island faces.

“We live on a tropical island where the power grid is very weak. With this equipment, helium is sealed, so we won’t lose it during power outages.”

Dr. Mayra Maldonado



Another challenge in managing MR scanners amidst such natural disasters is the process to get magnets back online, which can involve inspections, helium refills, power ramp-ups and system checks. Philips BlueSeal magnets offer an

entirely new approach to this challenge – they are enabled with EasySwitch* technology, which allows for the safe and quick shutdown of the MRI machines in emergencies and enables rapid restart once conditions are stable.

“It was very important for us to have the option to shut down the system in emergencies. With the EasySwitch¹, we can turn off the MRI from the console, and once the situation is stable, we can start the system easily and quickly resuming to help our patients.”

Dr. Mayra Maldonado

This functionality gives staff the option to manage risk in previously restrictive emergency situations, ensuring patient care remains operational as long as possible. EasySwitch* allows for immediate action without needing to call technical service to ramp down the magnetic field, ensuring quick and effective responses to unexpected challenges.



Experts like Ernesto Morales predict more frequent natural disasters due to the ongoing effects of climate change, which will see warmer waters in our oceans that fuel increasingly powerful storms. This places a growing burden on clinical administrators and staff who now need to consider the resilience of their medical systems

and imaging operations when choosing how to invest – what solutions and tools enable them to stay operational in the face of increasingly likely emergencies? “We need to invest in resilient technologies that allow us to offer medical treatments to people that need those equipments functioning 24/7”, says Jose Javier Hernandez.



When we consider the potential impact of such powerful natural disasters, we can only reach one conclusion. “Preparedness is the only solution for this. We cannot move the island from where it is,” Morales emphasizes. In the face of these complicated environmental situations, Vida Imaging has found a powerful solution to keep their MR imaging practice up and running. “This system allows safe shutdowns when needed, preventing helium loss, and enables quick resumption of operations post-crisis. I was amazed when I discovered this technology.”

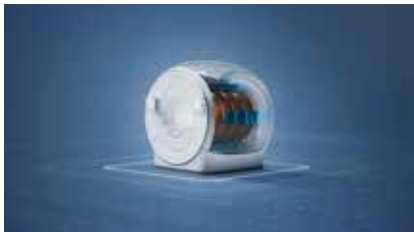
“First, the fact that there is no need for helium and I can treat my patient quickly after any emergency event. Second, the technology, the software, and the images aren’t just beautiful. I can make my diagnosis very comfortable and safe. For me, both things are important. I can treat my patients more quickly, which is, for me, the most important part of my job.”

Dr. Mayra Maldonado

While natural disasters and climate change can often be a disheartening reality to consider, Vida Imaging has delivered a powerful example of hope and resilience, as a team of medical professionals doing everything they can to keep their imaging services up and running for patients. Active preparation for these unplanned situations can keep services up and running

for as long as possible, get operations back online without waiting for external factors, and empower teams to respond proactively to whatever surprises our climate has for us. Dr. Maldonado's vision for high quality, resilient healthcare services has charted a path for enduring adversity through extraordinary times.

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