



Enjoy 'Peace of Mind' with Remote Services

Predictive maintenance through remote monitoring

Who/where

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Sault St. Marie, Ontario
Canada

Challenge

Maintain a 99.9% uptime for all imaging systems at a remote hospital, which is the only medical facility in town.

Solution

Opt for a Philips service agreement with Remote Services to avoid scheduling disruptions and reduce downtime.

When is an event a non-event?

When it's handled preemptively through Philips remote services.

For the busy diagnostic imaging department at Sault Area Hospital, a potential problem with their primary CT was identified and corrected with no interruption in workflow.

"When something that could potentially be a critical event, is actually a non-event, then you know the service works," says Joe D'Angelo, Manager of Diagnostic Imaging at Sault Area Hospital in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada.

D'Angelo was speaking about an issue with his hospital's Brilliance 64-slice CT, one of two CTs in the imaging department. An anomaly was detected via 24/7 remote monitoring and quick action of the Philips Customer Services team helped avert any downtime.

Defined by geography

The Sault Area Hospital, located in Sault Ste. Marie, is defined by its geographical location. Situated at the confluence of Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, and Lake Huron, it serves 150,000 people in the surrounding Algoma District communities. It is however, the only full service medical facility for miles.

"The next closest medical center is an 8 hour drive away, in Toronto," says D'Angelo. "Or we have one in Thunder Bay, another 8 hours to the north. In between, there just isn't very much. Because of our geographic location and because we're the only game in town, good service for our equipment is important to us."

New facility, new equipment

In 2011, Sault Area Hospital moved to its brand new campus on 70 acres in the Greenfield area of the city. This state-of-the-art, 300-bed hospital boasts an imaging department run by a staff of 80 and outfitted with two CTs, one MR, an interventional suite, a cardiac cath lab, an array of digital radiography units, digital mammography, and nuclear medicine.

It's a complete Philips facility. Philips was awarded the single vendor contract based not only on the quality of the imaging systems, but also on the accompanying service support.

Notes D'Angelo, "The decision was based on many variables, one of which was service. We've been very satisfied with Philips service in the past, so it was a big part of the equation. Philips has two FSEs in town and the response times are simply excellent."

PHILIPS



A red flag goes up

Central to the service support for the new hospital is Philips Remote Services, which includes 24-hour remote monitoring of the department's critical imaging equipment. "One morning, automated alerts generated by the CT at Sault were received by the Philips remote services team," recalls Philips FSE, Paul Dowding. Through a system called RADAR, automated alerts notify the Philips remote services team when a CT has a potential issue. In this case the alert detected an increase in the amount of resends, that is, it was resending the acquired data across the laser link between the rotational and stationary part of the CT. It was intermittently not transmitting data."

This was significant, as the Brilliance 64-slice CT is the department's primary system. "We run CT around the clock," states D'Angelo. "It's one of our 'staple' modalities. One of our two units is a Brilliance Big Bore 16-slice and the other is a Brilliance 64-slice. The 64-slice is our workhorse. That's the one we depend on the most for speed and image quality."

Dowding acted quickly after learning of the remote alert detected through RADAR. He, along with Darius Sampey, a CT National Support Specialist, made a plan for resolution.

"I scheduled a visit with the hospital and informed the CT techs about the problem. However, they said they hadn't seen any problems arise. I told them that we are constantly monitoring the equipment, and we have a potential issue." On-site, Dowding performed a bypass test, confirming the #10 laser output was low on the transmitter.

Interruptions not welcome

Any interruption in CT workflow is a concern. For Sault Area hospital it is doubly difficult. Their position as the only major medical facility in the area means doctors and patients have few alternatives. When downtime occurs and waiting is not possible, the options are dramatic.

"If management of the patient does not afford waiting, then the patient has to be flown to another center," explains D'Angelo. "It's as simple as that. Not driven – flown. We have a network of helicopters and fixed wing aircraft that provide this service for us. Needless to say, it is very, very, significant."

In addition, the Sault Area Hospital takes part in the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's provincial plan to reduce wait times. These wait time goals apply to several modalities

including CT. For CT, the goals are:

- 90% of patients at the elective, or priority 4 level, must receive their imaging within 28 days or less
- 90% of patient at the priority 3 level (cancer related imaging) must receive their imaging within 10 days or less
- 90% of urgent patients must receive their imaging within 2 days or less
- 90% of stat patient must receive imaging within hours

"We strive to attain those targets," says D'Angelo, "and to do so, it's imperative that our technology is up and running all the time."

World-class support

In addition to 24/7 proactive remote monitoring, Philips Remote Services includes remote diagnosis and repair, as well as "over-the-shoulder" clinical support.

"It was caught, proactively, even before it appeared on the 'radar' of our CT techs. That was the beauty of it."

Joe D'Angelo, Sault Area Hospital



“Remote Services helped us avoid unplanned downtime and patient rescheduling. We are completely satisfied.”

Joe D'Angelo, Sault Area Hospital

As machine-to-machine alerts are reported daily through RADAR, the data is analyzed to detect trends that may lead to a potential issue. Often, this results in remote repair. For example, in a situation where image data may be reaching recommended capacity, a remote services engineer can log-in through a secure remote link to remove unwanted files thereby improving system performance.

Likewise, with a call to the the Customer Care Support Center, clinical experts can use a secure remote link and a tool called Remote Desktop to troubleshoot clinical questions and address them.

An event avoided

Before arriving on-site, Dowding was equipped with specific details about the service issue. The CT techs at Sault Area Hospital determined the best time for Paul to make an on site visit. Without affecting scheduling, Paul Dowding got to work on the remedy and put the CT back online.

“We weren’t acting in a crisis mode,” recalls D’Angelo. “We were able to manage our schedule proactively, and we weren’t down. And due to our close relationship with Philips, we were able to provide them the time to go in and do what needed to be done.”

Making the right choice

By avoiding downtime, there was no interruption to the department’s schedule. Sault Area Hospital was able to maintain its CT caseload. In retrospect, the decision to purchase a Philips service agreement with Remote Services was a wise one.

For Joe D’Angelo and Sault Area Hospital, it’s all about service to the people – the patient is #1. According to D’Angelo, “99% uptime doesn’t cut it with us. 99.9%

uptime, now that’s getting closer to what we like to see. So when the option for Philips Remote Services was presented, we knew it could help us provide exceptional service to the people of Sault Ste. Marie. And for us, this recent incident proves that true.”

When is an event a non-event?

Philips Remote Services identified that there was a potential issue before anything dramatic occurred. The FSE intervened to prevent a downtime event. The problem was identified, repaired, and detailed in documentation to Joe D’Angelo indicating that all was returned to normal.

“When we speak of value,” concludes D’Angelo, “I can’t put a number on that. Every downtime has the potential for severe impact. Because of our geographic situation, Philips Remote Services is of the utmost importance to us in Sault Ste. Marie.”

“This event? It really was a non-event. It happened in the background. Which means the service worked exactly as it was spelled out to us.”



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