



## CASE STUDY

# Houston Northwest Medical Center Relies on RightFax

*From registration to records, Houston Northwest Medical Center needed to streamline delivery of mission-critical information. By automating manual processes with Captaris RightFax, it cut three-day processes down to minutes, saved more than \$1,200 per month in mail expenses, ensured security of private patient data and—most importantly—enhanced patient satisfaction.*

## COMPANY

Houston Northwest Medical Center is an acute care hospital with close to 380 operational beds and a 30-year history serving the Northwest Houston community. The hospital provides medical and surgical care, including women's health, an active emergency department, cardiology, pediatrics and other services.

## CHALLENGE

James McNatty, Systems Analyst for Houston Northwest Medical Center, has worked in the medical field for 20 years. He sets standards based on experience and the hospital's mission to provide quality care. "You don't compromise patient care due to loss of orders, downtime for handling paperwork or other delays," he said. Prior to using RightFax, the hospital relied on a manual fax method that was a source of frustration for physician offices, patients and staff.

**Registration** - Before processing a patient, registration must receive orders from the patient's doctor. "They cannot do anything for a patient until they have that order in hand," McNatty said. Ironically, keeping the documents "in hand" was the challenge. Every day, hundreds of orders were received via fax machines, and papers were too easily shuffled or misplaced. Other times doctors' offices did not send the orders in the first place. According to McNatty, patients would sometimes arrive for an appointment only to wait for hours while the registration desk tracked down the order.

**Medical Staff** - Several times a month, the hospital sends meeting reminders and other notices to physicians and internal personnel. Manual fax distribution for one notice could last up to five hours, pulling staff members from other important responsibilities. "Staff members were literally standing in front of fax machines," McNatty said.

**Pharmacy** - All Houston Northwest Medical Center nursing stations and the in-house pharmacy used fax machines. This resulted in high hardware and maintenance expenses on both ends. During busy times, orders could be missed. "The pharmacy fax machine could only handle so many orders before it would be busy," McNatty said. "By that time, the nurse had walked away from the fax machine assuming that the fax had surely been received."

**Medical Records/HIPAA Compliance** - When patient information is sent to and from fax machines, confidentiality cannot be well assured. "Records can sit on a fax machine available to any one walking by," McNatty said. For instance, prior to using RightFax the hospital mailed bi-monthly notices to physicians to complete charts or face suspension. It would cost close to \$1,200 per month to print, collate, stuff and send those letters via certified post. The costs related to productivity obstacles were even greater: "It took Health Information Management (HIM) staff about three days to put together the mailing," McNatty said.

## SOLUTION

"With RightFax, we've taken a manual fax process to an automated process and have significantly cut down on any of the problems we experienced before," McNatty said. Houston Northwest Medical Center implemented RightFax Enterprise Server from Captaris. RightFax solutions for healthcare streamline processes, reduce costs and support HIPAA compliance initiatives.

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*"Effectively managing orders improves patient satisfaction and reduces length of stay in the hospital. That is a highlight of using RightFax." —James McNatty, Houston Northwest Medical Center*

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## RESULTS

According to McNatty, RightFax is a great addition to the services it provides and is valuable to every department.

**Registration** - "Effectively managing orders improves patient satisfaction and reduces outpatient wait times in the hospital. That is a highlight of using RightFax," McNatty reported. RightFax delivers faxes to secure computers rather than fax machines. At Houston Northwest Medical Center, the faxes are managed by a central person who monitors orders and electronically files them for the other registration employees, whether they are in another department or off-site. There is no interruption of patient care to locate orders. Employees may sort faxes based on sender's fax numbers for easy access. McNatty explained: "Even when they find the doctor hasn't faxed the order, they can call the doctor's office and within minutes, see the fax, print it and get the patient going."

**Medical Staff** - There is no more standing in front of fax machines whenever notices must be distributed. "Staff members love it now," McNatty reported. "The way we get information out has changed from hours to minutes." Using the FaxUtil user interface, employees can easily check for transmission. When met by busy signals, RightFax automatically retries the number several times, saving personnel from manually conducting the task. "Automation with RightFax is amazing," McNatty said. "The time-savings is tremendous." Improved productivity allows employees to maintain a strategic focus. "It allows them to be more efficient with other aspects of their jobs," McNatty said.

**Pharmacy** - Nurses continue to send signed orders via machines; however, the pharmacy receives orders in RightFax where they view the prescription while it is automatically forwarded to a network printer. During busy times, RightFax directs incoming transmissions into a queue and nurses return to patients with confidence orders will be transmitted.

**Medical Records/HIPAA Compliance** - RightFax supports HIPAA compliance efforts, according to McNatty. "With RightFax we have an audit trail and information is regulated inside of RightFax so only authorized personnel will see the information. It's secure." Also, communication with physician offices has improved using RightFax to automatically fax notices to doctors. Rather than spending three days stuffing envelopes, HIM staff members prepare the time-sensitive information within minutes. They simply choose recipients from an electronic listing, create a generic cover and attach the customized letter—RightFax does the rest. "The immediate response surprised us," McNatty said. "Within five minutes of faxing the notices, doctors' offices were calling to arrange for the doctor to have their incomplete records pulled for completion." Cost-savings add up significantly for a process that also returns increased productivity.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Captaris Business Information Delivery solutions help organizations of all sizes automate the information and document flow throughout the information lifecycle (capture, process, archive, deliver). With a comprehensive suite of software and services, Captaris helps organizations to grow revenues and increase profits while meeting compliance goals. Through a global distribution network of leading enterprise technology partners, Captaris has installed more than 90,000 systems in 95 countries in companies of all sizes, including the entire Fortune 100. For more information, visit [www.captaris.com](http://www.captaris.com) or call 1.800.443.0806.

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