

Medical Imaging and CST: Questions and Answers



Q: Many medical imaging teams currently use standalone information systems that are not integrated with the hospital's information system. What will happen after the new, shared clinical information system is activated as part of the CST project?

A: Every medical imaging Radiology Information System (RIS) currently in use in VCH, PHSA and PHC will be replaced by the new clinical

information system (except for Screening Mammography, which will use an external system). Specifically, medical imaging staff will use a Cerner module called RadNet. Teams that are currently using paper to document medical imaging will also use the new system, which will integrate with related systems such as PACS and speech recognition reporting.

This means that radiology patient records, including appointments and requests, will be consolidated and shared across all sites. It also means that clinical staff will have access to medical imaging documentation, patient exam history, reports and the patient's electronic medical record. The end result should be a much more complete patient history, improved patient care and a reduction of duplicate medical imaging exams.

Q: Will medical imaging staff have access to information about the patient, as well as images?

A: Yes. With a few specific exceptions, such as particularly sensitive information, clinicians and clinical support staff will have access to all health information pertaining to the patient to whom they are providing care, including information from different health care facilities and programs within VCH, PHSA and PHC.

Q: Currently, different medical imaging departments use different terminology – for example, the contents of exam dictionaries vary from location to location, as do the names we use for different rooms. Will this change?

A: Yes. Medical imaging documentation and processes will be standardized as much as possible across VCH, PHSA and PHC, based on best practice. Medical imaging staff from across all three health organizations along with the CST MI Design Team are working together to define and agree to standard terminology and processes, in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to deliver safer patient care. This includes combining several MI order catalogues into one, to ensure consistent ordering practices across MI departments.

Q: Will the new system be as user-friendly as our current system?

A: We are working hard to make sure the new system will be user-friendly, although introducing any new system can be challenging and users will undoubtedly experience a steep learning curve. CST has a dedicated Transformational Learning Team, including a Medical Imaging Learning Coordinator who is working closely with the design team to ensure thorough, consistent and standardized training for all Medical Imaging staff. This training will include a combination of self-paced online learning sessions and specialized classroom courses, complemented by hands-on practice with the new system and a range of learning resources. Once all imaging departments are live with RadNet, the user experience for those working across sites will be easier and more efficient due to consistent, standardized systems, workflows and practices.

Q: Medical imaging appointment bookings are very complicated and numerous. How will they be managed within the new clinical information system?

Medical imaging appointments will be scheduled electronically in the new clinical information system across all sites. CST's Medical Imaging design team will work with all facilities to configure a scheduling system that meets the needs of all departmental scheduling processes.

Q: We currently start and stop exams in the medical imaging information system. Will that be the same or different?

This practice will remain the same; exams will be started and completed through the RadNet Exam Management application based on departmental policies and procedures.

Q: Will medical imaging staff still document their work in the same way?

As much as possible, documentation will move from paper processes to electronic processes in the new system. Some electronic documentation will occur within RadNet, while other documentation will occur in the broader electronic chart.

Background information

The Clinical & Systems Transformation project is a joint initiative of three health organizations: Vancouver Coastal Health, Provincial Health Services Authority and Providence Health Care. The project is designed to transform health care delivery systems and processes to improve the safety, quality and consistency of the patient and caregiver experience. CST will support the health organizations in establishing common clinical and process standards, including workflows, order sets, clinical guidelines integrated plans of care and a common electronic health record. This clinical transformation will be supported by the implementation of a clinical information system that will replace aging existing systems. The project will be implemented in stages across the health organizations.

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