

## CASE STUDY - IRIS BIOMETRICS FOR PATIENT IDENTIFICATION

Increasing patient safety, eliminating duplicates, and preventing fraud and ID theft at Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital

**Background:** Nestled in the western piedmont wine country of North Carolina, Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital (HCMH) has provided high quality medical care for residents over a distinguished 82-year history. A private, not-for-profit hospital, HCMH employs more than 940, and is served by more than 70 physicians representing 26 specialties or subspecialties.

With a legacy of serving the citizens of their region, Hugh Chatham continually works to earn their reputation as the region's choice for technology and care. They focus on quality of patient care and achieving excellent patient satisfaction to be the best community hospital in the nation and consistently deliver exceptional healthcare by demonstrating the values of service, accountability, respect, and safe care.

**Challenge:** Like most hospitals, Hugh Chatham's focus on providing quality, safe patient care required consistent evaluations of internal IT infrastructure to identify areas of improvement. Duplicate medical records, overlays, and patient fraud continued to be areas of concern due to their negative impact on patient safety and hospital liabilities.

Hugh Chatham's challenge was to identify a flexible and affordable technology that would create a unique identifier linked to a patient's medical record to eliminate duplicate medical records and patient fraud. The solution must be easy for staff to use, require minimal internal resources to implement, seamlessly interface with their electronic health record (EHR) system, provide fast results, and could easily be scaled to use across a health information exchange (HIE) or integrated delivery network (IDN), ensuring a clean MPI.



**Solution:** In an effort to address the problem of how duplicate medical records and patient fraud negatively impact patient safety HCMH recognized using biometric identification technology to more accurately identify patients and maintain a clean MPI was a practical solution. Originally investing in a biometric patient identification solution based on palm vein technology, they quickly realized several concerns and limitations to the platform, specifically:

- The inability to prevent all duplicate and overlay medical records at the time of patient enrollment due to the need for a segmented (i.e. 1:Few) search
- The inefficiency, increased possibility of keystroke errors, and negative impact on staff productivity from having to toggle between separate applications to access the palm vein patient identification solution
- Patients had to make physical contact with the reader which was not hygienic in a hospital environment
- Staff frustration with the system causing them to bypass using it and being locked into a single biometric modality that limited their ability to leverage the best biometric technologies as they continue to evolve

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Based on the limitations of the palm vein patient identification system, they elected to switch to RightPatient®, the industry's only multi-biometric patient identity solution, with iris biometrics - considered as the most accurate biometric identification modality.

**Benefits:** Since they made the decision to switch from palm vein biometrics to RightPatient® iris patient identification, Hugh Chatham has been pleased with the performance, usability, and staff/patient acceptance of the technology. Specifically, they have identified several key differentiators of RightPatient® iris biometric patient identification platform in comparison to their previous solution:

- The ability to prevent all duplicate and overlay medical records at the time of enrollment, which they were not aware was a limitation of their previous biometric patient identification system
- No patient contact with an iris camera rendering a much more hygienic solution in a hospital environment
- The ability to display a patient's digital photo during enrollment, check-in, and at every patient care touch point provides a multi-factor authentication mechanism
- RightPatient® easily and seamlessly interfaced with their existing EHR, requiring minimal internal IT full time equivalents (FTEs) - the system was up and running in less than one week



- Staff acceptability is positive, requiring less than one day of training before launch
- RightPatient® offers a mobile component that allows medical staff to identify patients with any Windows-based tablet
- Iris biometrics has been independently tested and certified rendering it a standardized data format to confidently share clean data across a HIE or IDN

The switch to RightPatient® has proved to be a smart choice by Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital as they continue to capitalize on the distinct advantages it offers over their previous patient identification system.



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