



How one provider reduced wait times and costs with TrueV technology

PET/CT imaging at Hackensack University Medical Center



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Hackensack University Medical Center

When the demand for your PET/CT imaging services outpaces the available appointments, what are your options? This is the question Michael Horton, Administrative Director of Clinical Services at Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC), Hackensack, NJ, faced. As the flagship hospital of the Hackensack Meridian Health Network, the 771-bed HUMC is the largest provider of inpatient and outpatient services in New Jersey and home to facilities such as John Theurer Cancer Center, the Heart & Vascular Hospital, and the Sarkis and Siran Gabrellian Women's and Children's Pavilion.



High PET/CT exam volume

"Our facility was struggling to keep up with the demand for PET/CT appointments," says Horton. "The volume greatly exceeded our capacity and availability. We were regularly performing 15-18 PET/CT scans per day between the hours of 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. Not only was this a drain on resources, but it also created a substantial backlog of patients."

With its Biograph Horizon PET/CT, HUMC had a system that could support its clinical procedures. What they needed, however, was a way to decrease scan times and increase patient throughput. The high wait times and costs associated with attempts to keep up with PET/CT exam demand needed to be solved. Not only could those factors impact patient and staff satisfaction as well as overhead costs, but HUMC also competes with several prominent hospitals in Bergen county, as well as larger entities across the river in New York City and numerous outpatient imaging centers nearby.

A truly cost-effective solution

After reviewing the options, decision-makers decided to upgrade the Biograph Horizon to TrueV. This technology extends the PET field of view, enabling clinicians to perform imaging studies at twice the scan speed or half the patient dose, which can help a department optimize its clinical operations and improve patient experiences.

"This upgrade was the most cost-effective solution to solve our problem," says Horton. "The growth in outpatient PET scan volume, coupled with the enhanced patient experience, made the acquisition of the TrueV upgrade a wise investment. And, we achieved a break-even level in under 4 months."

“We created four more appointment slots a day and decreased our operating hours to 12, down from 14. In the event of an emergency, we also can accommodate 25 patients a day, if necessary.”

Michael Horton

Administrative Director of Clinical Services at
Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC)

More flexibility, less dose

Since upgrading its time-of-flight enabled Biograph Horizon to TrueV, HUMC has been able to increase its capacity to 22 patients scanned per day, while decreasing hours of operation by two. “We created four more appointment slots a day and decreased our operating hours to 12, down from 14. In the event of an emergency, we also can accommodate 25 patients a day, if necessary,” Horton continues.

The results from the TrueV upgrade speak for themselves. The longer specialty studies can now be performed throughout the day without delaying other patients or blocking out additional appointment slots. The efficiency of the larger detector additionally provided the ability to lower the injected radiopharmaceutical dose from 10-15 mCi to 8-12mCi, while still decreasing total scan times. In addition to scheduling flexibility and dose reduction, the department’s overtime has been greatly reduced.

“Honestly, this upgrade was a game-changer at HUMC. For a facility struggling with keeping up with demand and desire to increase throughput, the TrueV upgrade is the only choice you should make,” Horton adds. “Siemens Healthineers has been there every step of the way and have proven themselves to be steadfast and reliable healthcare partners.”

Jesse William, Chief Technologist of Nuclear Medicine (left) and Michael Horton, Administrative Director of Clinical Services (right)



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Note: The data in this customer case study was obtained in 2021.

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