

InterSystems Ensemble[®] improves the business and practice of medicine at Metro Health

Metro Health, based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, serves a population of 130,000 through a 208-bed hospital and 10 neighborhood outpatient centers. In 2005 Metro Health replaced its SeeBeyond eGate integration engine with InterSystems Ensemble rapid integration and development software. What they've found since then is that their developers are accomplishing much more than ever before, in less time; their systems easily keep up with peak demands; and system reliability is now taken for granted instead of being cause for celebration.



- **Productivity**
- **Performance**
- **Reliability**

"Ensemble has become a key component in our hospital's data infrastructure, supplying vital information to all areas of the enterprise."

*Jennifer Dennis,
senior programmer analyst,
integration team leader*

Business process improvement with Ensemble

"The speed with which our integration programmers can develop connections between

systems is one of the major benefits of Ensemble," says Jon Klynstra, Metro Health director of IT. Using Ensemble, Metro Health has automated real-time synchronization of patient demographic and clinical data among 33 different systems. This integration supports delivery of the best possible healthcare experience for patients, physicians, employees, and the greater community.

Efficiency benefits

In Metro Health's busy environment, using Ensemble to eliminate manual entry and re-entry of patient data has had a substantial economic impact:

- With approximately 1,500 patient admissions per day (across all areas of Metro Health), automated synchronization of patient data among 33 different systems saves Metro Health approximately 650 hours per day in data entry time.
- Automated population of data into the lab system and automatic results reporting to multiple areas saves eight minutes per test. With approximately 2,020 orders per day, Ensemble saves Metro Health 269 hours per day in lab personnel time.
- Additional, similar savings accrue from process improvements in nursing, pharmacy, radiology, and other areas.

Patient care benefits

In an environment where speed and fewer errors can save lives, the business process efficiencies realized with Ensemble have had a direct impact on patient safety, care, and service. Most notably:

- “STAT” orders for emergency room and intensive care unit patients are delivered immediately to the lab and radiology. Results are communicated back to the issuing physician via Ensemble up to 50% faster than before.
- Doctors see a complete picture of each patient’s health, as automatic synchronization of patient data prevents data loss that sometimes occurs with manual methods.
- Pharmacy turnaround time has improved eight-fold via Ensemble interfaces to the automated medication dispensing system.
- Patients no longer endure repeated requests for the same information as they move from one department to another. Information is entered once, and automatically synchronized with departmental and other systems.

Easy to learn, use, and manage

Ensemble is an easier to learn and use, and more produc-

tive environment for Metro Health because it is a single, architecturally consistent technology stack. It seamlessly combines a rapid application development environment with messaging, integration, business process management (BPM), business activity monitoring (BAM), and advanced data management capabilities. “I had no previous experience with integration engines when I joined the integration team at Metro,” notes senior programmer analyst, Dale Klahn. “It didn’t take me long to come up to speed with Ensemble. It was very straightforward and easy to learn. Its BPM capabilities are more flexible than the dedicated BPM product I used before, and simple enough so you can get work done quickly.”

“Automating business processes using Ensemble has translated directly into significant benefits for our patients.”

Jennifer Dennis

“Ease of management is another key benefit of Ensemble,” explains Klynstra. “It’s freed up time for our developers to create instead of troubleshoot, and for expanded use of Ensemble features.” Metro Health is finding that Ensemble’s message persistence, and its embedded object repository, are vital to keeping operations running smoothly and to rapid problem identification in the rare case a problem arises. “Ensemble’s message persistence, and using Visual Trace to see messages that have gone in and out of the system and where they’ve gone, is just night and day better than what we had before,” adds Chad Nichols, senior programmer analyst.

High reliability, continuous improvement

Uptime of the Ensemble-based system has been a major benefit of the change from eGate, according to Jennifer Dennis, Metro Health senior programmer analyst and integration team leader. “When we first started with Ensemble, we had a seven year old server that we weren’t using”, Dennis explains. “We installed Ensemble on it and it ran for 2 years with no unscheduled downtime. Ensemble is a really solid application.”

Based on its reliability, manageability, high performance, and advanced capabilities, Metro Health views Ensemble as a platform that will support years of growth. “Ensemble has become a key component in our hospital’s data infrastructure, supplying vital information to all areas of the enterprise,” says Dennis. “We see no limit to the opportunities to apply Ensemble to reduce costs and improve patient care throughout our organization.”

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