

STRONG FOUNDATIONS FOR SMARTER CARE

AFTER INTERNATIONAL BORDERS CLOSED, MERCYASCOT FORGED AHEAD WITH A VIRTUAL GO-LIVE OF THEIR NEW EMR WITHOUT THE VENDOR ON SITE. REBECCA MCBETH INTERVIEWED THEIR EMR PROJECT TEAM TO FIND OUT MORE.

A fully integrated Electronic Medical Record (EMR) is a fundamental enabler for Healthcare Holdings to achieve its vision of being a value-based care provider.

The concept is a simple one: that providers should aim to deliver the best possible outcome for consumers in a cost-effective manner by moving towards value-based models of care.

Sarah Gardner, general manager patient engagement and quality, MercyAscot and TrakCare project director, explains that data and digital solutions are key in order to quantify the delivery of services and measure health outcomes for patients.

"To be a value-based provider, we need to have data-rich information from the start of our patients' journeys through to the end," she says.

"It's about using data to drive great outcomes for our patients at every opportunity."

"Horizon two is being a mature analytics organisation. Once you've got your data digitised and ready for action, my view is, the world is your oyster. It is then a matter of using it to get the best outcome in terms of value strategies to drive an improved patient outcome or deliver more cost-effective care," he says.

"Horizon three is the innovation horizon and the EMR is also foundational in being able to automate and utilise things like AI and machine learning, and embedding a culture of change across the organisation."

The art of the possible

MercyAscot previously worked with the Northern DHBs on a plan to purchase an Electronic Medical Record for the region, which ultimately did not deliver a product.

Gardner says that experience provided excellent insight and education into the "art of the

"THE EMR IS ABOUT MAKING REAL TIME DECISIONS WITH REAL TIME INFORMATION AND MAKING IT REALLY ACCESSIBLE WHEREVER YOU ARE IN THE ECOSYSTEM OF HEALTHCARE."

A story of transformation

For Lloyd McCann, chief executive Mercy Radiology & Clinics and head of digital health, Healthcare Holdings, the EMR is the foundation of the organisation's digital transformation.

The investment in the EMR and future initiatives to unlock value from the data it captures are key to continuing to be a leading provider of health care services in New Zealand.

By embracing the concept of 'healthy data'—which is accessible, useable and ready for action—the EMR is enabling MercyAscot to become a data driven organisation, says McCann.

possible" and convinced them of the benefits of a fully integrated and hosted EMR system.

During a robust procurement process, InterSystems met the brief of requirements and "ultimately came up with the best price and product", she says.

McCann says the organisation considered going with a hybrid approach, but that brings the added risk and complexity of managing multiple vendors. "Having a simplified foundational layer helps with the innovation that will come downstream."

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WITH...



Dr Lloyd McCann
chief executive
Mercy Radiology & Clinics
head of digital health
Healthcare Holdings



Sarah Gardner
general manager - patient
engagement & quality
MercyAscot
EMR project director



InterSystems TrakCare is a foundational enabler for value-based care at Healthcare Holdings, including Mercy Radiology and MercyAscot Hospitals

The initial TrakCare deployment in May 2020 involved a virtual go-live during New Zealand's national level three lockdown

Digital transformation is creating a mature analytics organisation, utilising AI and machine learning, and embedding a culture of change

"TO BE A VALUE BASED PROVIDER, WE NEED TO HAVE DATA RICH INFORMATION FROM THE START OF OUR PATIENTS' JOURNEYS THROUGH TO THE END."

Clinicians and management were involved in the selection process for the EMR and once selected, InterSystems "worked with our business to understand the needs of the customer," he says.

For Gardner, the next steps were about clearly defining how the solution would fit the organisation's strategic priorities, starting to craft the implementation, identifying gaps and building the necessary resources to achieve their aims.

The importance of partnership

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, MercyAscot had been in the final planning stages of its go-live with the TrakCare Patient Administration System and billing functionality.

This was the first phase of the full InterSystems EMR deployment, with clinical functionality planned to go live in 2021.

As the country went into national lockdown to prevent spread of the virus, however, it became obvious InterSystems staff could not be onsite for the deployment.

Gardner says the organisation had done a lot of preparation pre-lockdown and felt that the longer they waited to go live, the harder it would have been.

"We knew that if there was less time between that preparation and go-live, we'd have a higher likelihood that our staff would retain all of the hard work they'd already completed," she says.

So the MercyAscot team embarked on something never tried before: a virtual go-live during lockdown.

Completed in May 2020, the virtual go-live was supported by InterSystems remotely using videoconferencing and other collaboration tools.

It involved migrating more than 300,000 patient records and was one of the first worldwide to deploy TrakCare on the Microsoft Azure Stack, with cloud partner Umbrellar.

Gardner says this is the first deployment of the full InterSystems EMR in New Zealand, which comes with some learnings around local clinical safety expectations and standards.

The strong partnership with their vendor is "absolutely critical" to getting it right, she says.

Embedding a culture of change

The next step is to go live with some TrakCare clinical modules in mid-2021, such as medication management, nursing documentation and perioperative care.

In the past, clinical notes were mostly paper based. This means they cannot be viewed from multiple locations and staff can waste precious time hunting for files.

"The EMR is about making real time decisions with real time information and making it really accessible wherever you are in the ecosystem of healthcare," says Gardner.

The organisation is deploying a single sign-on solution to avoid

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clinicians having to remember multiple logins. It is looking at voice to text technology that will allow them to dictate notes, as well as automation of early warning scores from vital signs.

Gardner says ensuring senior leaders in the organisation understand and can champion the journey is critical to change being adopted on the hospital floor.

"For me the change management part of this process is really critical," she says.

"The more time we spend being really clear about why we are doing something and what the benefits are that we are trying to achieve, the more confidence we build across the business that the direction of change is going to be transformative."

McCann adds that change management alone is not enough. "This is about building and continually embedding the change culture. Traditionally, the story is that change is hard in health, but we need to flip that on its head: change needs to be easy in health."

The power of data

Implementing an EMR has led to a significant Business Intelligence deployment at MercyAscot.

"To truly become a data driven organisation you need data in a digital format," McCann says.

This data illustrates to funders, for example, the complexity of the organisation as an elective services provider and the case-mix it handles.

"Now we have the ability to drill down to look at the case mix and comorbidities and none of that was easily achievable with a paper record," he says.

The private provider is committed to sharing information with the local public health providers as there is a lot of movement of patients between services. For DHBs this will be via their regional clinical portal and, with primary care, via a system called TestSafe.

"We're setting ourselves up to have interoperability across the national scope of healthcare, which is really exciting," explains McCann.

"From a clinician's perspective, that could mean you do not need to order a new set of lab results because you can already access the latest results for that person."

Gardner says MercyAscot is moving towards being a more consumer-driven organisation and key to that is empowering patients to make informed choices.

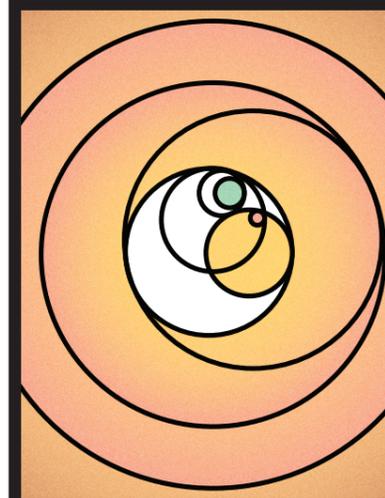
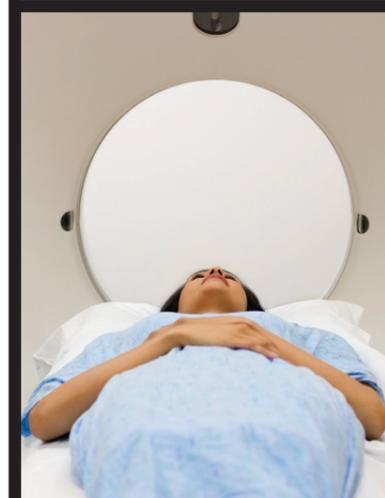
"We have to start with a single source of truth and that's our EMR," she says.

"It's about real-time data being used to inform patient outcomes. That's the heart of it." ©



Hear more from Sarah Gardner and Dr Lloyd McCann. Listen to eHealthTALK NZ episode 5 – Value-based care on Spotify, Buzzsprout, Apple and Google podcasts.

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