

MI LifeNet is a web-based resource that provides a full spectrum of educational tools, reimbursement information, marketing materials, and practice management tools to boost dynamic growth of molecular imaging centers and molecular imaging departments in hospitals. Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital has been using the service fervently since 2003.

By Claudette Yasell

Online Resources for the Imaging Center



MI University offers access to a comprehensive collection of introductory lectures, case studies, etc., in PET-CT and SPECT-CT (left). Customizable reporting tools enable staff and administration to find growth opportunities (middle). The nuclear medicine staff at RWJ University Hospital (right) uses them to that end.

MI LifeNet has been offered to Siemens molecular imaging customers and fluoro-deoxyglucose (FDG) users since 2002 as an information, education, and marketing portal, and has evolved significantly since then. Today, the site measures its success by over 5,000 registered users. It is not only the portal to access the Molecular Imaging (MI) University, the industry's most complete resource for case-study information, operational recommendations, and introductory lectures on positron emission tomography-computed tomography (PET-CT) and single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT-CT). It has also become a place where imaging centers can find tool kits on hot topics with best-practice advice on subjects such as meeting new accreditation guidelines, how to respond to the drastic reimbursement changes in the USA, or how to utilize the National Oncologic PET Registry (NOPR).

In addition, it has become a helpful platform for imaging centers to optimize their workflow with advanced tools such

as online dose ordering and electronic transfer of patient studies to referring physicians for review. As a response to the recent increase of economic pressures for imaging centers, MI LifeNet also offers customizable business reports which allow the administration to closely monitor the imaging center's business and then respond to it with the marketing and education solutions that are provided on MI LifeNet.

Successfully Applied in Practice

Steve Wozniak, Nuclear Medicine Supervisor, and the Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) University Hospital's nuclear medicine staff in Hamilton, NJ, USA, use the MI LifeNet tool on a daily basis for everything from ordering FDG doses for future scans, to running reports, to helping patients prepare for molecular imaging scans. All the nuclear medicine staffers at the hospital have access to MI LifeNet. "Using MI LifeNet is really convenient for our operation. I just import the upcoming schedule and send. And anyone on my staff can do the ordering if I am not

here," Wozniak says. "Using the online FDG ordering feature provides accurate management reports that give the hospital a perspective on how often physicians are referring for molecular imaging and for which indications," he adds. The hospital's marketing representatives from its mobile PET-CT service also have access to MI LifeNet so that they can stay abreast of all the varying types of referrals for molecular imaging. "As the molecular imaging industry evolves, the clinical applications and indications for diagnostic scans continually expand, and thus, our staff is aware of the most current applications for the technology they are promoting," says Wozniak.

Detailed Reporting

Customized reporting tools available on MI LifeNet allow medical and administration personnel to see where referrals are coming from and, specifically, to sort referrals by indication, Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) code, referring doctor, referring group or facility, and by reason, such as for initial diagnosis, staging, or

restaging. This type of information enables the staff to identify growth opportunities in cases where molecular imaging techniques are not used. For example, a certain physician may refer frequently, but not for the indication of lung cancer. The imaging facility can follow up with that physician individually, take the opportunity to show him or her new data available for using molecular imaging techniques for staging and restaging lung cancer, demonstrate the value of using this type of technology,

what to expect before and after their molecular imaging scan. Wozniak reports that there has been a lot of positive patient feedback about the site. When using this feature of MI LifeNet, customers also receive statistical reports on the number of visits to their website. MI LifeNet portal also provides users with access to current news and industry information. In the USA, for example, the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) has challenged the business of molecular imaging. MI



With MI LifeNet, patients can learn about MI techniques and the procedure of an MI scan.

and communicate the ultimate benefit for the patient. The reports available through MI LifeNet are completely customizable and available by month, day, year-to-date, indication, etc. The specific requested report query can be saved to use as a standard measure for the user's facility needs. Wozniak also adds that in addition to the resources provided by MI LifeNet, he coordinates a live lecture series at the hospital, where prominent physicians are invited to do case reviews in molecular imaging. These lecture series have served as another vehicle to increase awareness and highlight the increasing significance of using molecular imaging techniques in diagnosis and follow-up care for patients.

Customized Website

MI LifeNet also hosts a customized website for RWJ University Hospital in Hamilton, where patients can visit to get information about molecular imaging techniques and how they are used. Patients also receive information about

LifeNet provides customers with a DRA toolkit that contains helpful information and best-practice alternatives for the challenge of responding to reimbursement cuts, including customizable marketing material. Much of the information contained in MI LifeNet has been compiled through relationships with various physicians and institutions that have been willing to share their clinical data and information for the benefit of the whole community. In order to support Siemens customers both in their daily business as well as in their strategic decisions for the future, MI LifeNet aims to be the most comprehensive provider of best practice information and education in molecular imaging. It reflects the collective intelligence of molecular imaging experts worldwide. By the list of its content contributors, MI LifeNet demonstrates the depth and rich knowledge of the Siemens network. As the platform for sharing this collective wisdom and best practice, MI LifeNet enables all of its users to stay ahead of the curve.

Summary

Challenge:

- The need to better educate and communicate with patients in the field of molecular imaging
- Time-consuming ordering of consumables
- Dynamic reimbursement changes requiring up-to-date information for providers
- Implement effective marketing tools and create detailed reports relevant to the hospitals' needs
- Quick developments make it difficult for physicians to keep up-to-date

Solution:

- MI LifeNet customized website as a forum for patients to further educate themselves in the realm of MI
- Fast and easy ordering of FDG
- Toolkits with best practice advice and marketing material
- Customized reporting tools and archiving capabilities
- MI University with access to case studies, lectures, and recommendations

Result:

- Increased patient awareness, education, and communication
- High number of registered users
- Workflow optimization through electronic support
- Accurate and timely management reports

Claudette Yasell holds an MBA from Dominican University, River Forest, IL, USA.

Further Information
www.mi-lifenet.com