



Advanced and Affordable Patient Care for Your Community

Frankfort Regional Medical Center, Frankfort, KY
Northwest Medical Center, Albany, MO

Case Study

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Providing access to leading technology while carefully weighing the affordability of that technology has often proved to be a delicate balancing act for critical access and community hospitals—until now. The MAGNETOM® ESSENZA is helping lead the way, enabling community and rural hospitals the opportunity to expand their MR services and, thus, provide better care for their patients.

Take, for example, Frankfort Regional Medical Center in Frankfort, KY, and Northwest Medical Center in Albany, MO. Both hospitals play central roles in the ongoing health of the people in their communities—the nearest hospitals to Frankfort, KY, are more than 30 miles away, and Northwest Medical Center is a critical access hospital. As such, access to leading-edge care is vitally important to residents in both areas. Yet for these hospitals, finding affordable, advanced imaging solutions did not always seem possible.

Northwest Medical Center was using a mobile MRI unit, but it didn't sufficiently meet patient needs. The hospital didn't realize another solution existed, until its staff heard about the price point and capabilities of the 1.5T MAGNETOM ESSENZA. "For us, we looked at several systems, and many systems were simply out of our price range," says Donna Walter, vice president of Patient Care Services at Northwest Medical Center. "But price wasn't the only determining factor. Our radiologists preferred the MAGNETOM ESSENZA's image quality as well as its ease of use and size."

LaMont Coverstone, director of diagnostic imaging at Frankfort Regional Medical Center, agrees. "The MAGNETOM ESSENZA has a lot of features that a more expensive MR unit would have, but it's cost effective for community hospitals like ours."

“Our radiologists preferred the MAGNETOM ESSENZA’s image quality as well as its ease of use and size.”



Donna Walter
Vice President
Patient Care Services
Northwest Memorial

Excellent Images Close to Home

In tight-knit communities like these—and so many others across the country—hospital administrators understand that many factors can influence their patients' health. Taking the time off from work to travel a long distance for imaging services may not be feasible. And, the ability to go to a hospital where doctors, nurses, and staff know your name can have a significant impact on patient satisfaction. Thus, the need to provide excellent imaging, the kind of imaging that can impact clinical confidence and case management, speaks to the fundamental needs of patients in rural areas like these.

That's one reason why selecting a system that provided truly excellent images within their own communities was so important. "We were very impressed with the image quality," says Wesley Roney, MD, a staff radiologist at Frankfort Regional Medical Center.

"And, I have been very, very impressed by our proton density fat suppressed images, particularly for orthopedic applications." The radiologists, in fact, have commented that all the images are "beautiful" because they can see so much more than they could before.

And in some cases, with the old systems, both Frankfort Regional's and Northwest Medical Center's patients had to have imaging exams repeated due to the lack of image quality.

Now, repeat exams have been virtually eliminated. "It's absolutely, unequivocally reduced the number of repeat exams," says Dr. Roney.

MRI Staff at Frankfort Regional Medical Center:
(from left to right) Anita Cox, LaMont Coverstone,
Nancy Galasso, and Wendy Ellis





Radiology Staff at Northwest Memorial:
 (from left to right) Mistie Landrus, Brandy Gillispie,
 Justin Brown, Shanda Dierenfeldt, Randolph Desquitado,
 and John Richmond, President and CEO (seated)

Better Patient Care & Comfort

“We also knew that the relatively short bore would be very appealing in terms of patient comfort and imaging those patients who would otherwise be very anxious,” continues Dr. Roney. As such, not only would patients be able to receive their images close to home, but they would, hopefully, be less anxious about the process.

With its ultra-short magnet, the MAGNETOM ESSENZA enables many more “head-out” exams than other 1.5T systems, which also makes patients feel more at ease. “Patients are really comfortable getting an MRI,” says Randolph Desquitado, radiology manager at Northwest Medical Center. “Some of our patients are claustrophobic, but they can lie there and we can do the exam without a problem.”

In fact, the MAGNETOM ESSENZA features Tim® (Total imaging matrix) technology, which combines up to four different coils to make patient and coil repositioning virtually unnecessary. “Not having to reposition a patient is a big factor toward better patient satisfaction,” says Walter. “Our population is elderly and the repositioning was a big complaint we received about the mobile unit. There were some patients that simply couldn’t get up and lie back down.”

“We also knew that the relatively short bore would be very appealing in terms of patient comfort and imaging those patients who would otherwise be very anxious.”

Wesley Roney, MD
 Staff Radiologist
 Frankfort Regional
 Medical Center



The system’s small footprint additionally helps put patients at ease. “It’s not as overwhelming to our patients,” says Coverstone. “I think this helps them feel more comfortable and I know it’s been a bonus for us. We had a large room that was filled with equipment when we had our old MRI system. Now, it isn’t even half full. It’s just amazing. We have future plans to take over half that room and turn it into another area for technologists to use to interview the patient prior to going into the exam room.”

Increasing Referrals & Volumes

The MAGNETOM ESSENZA meets many clinical and budgetary needs with head-to-toe applications, including neurology, orthopedics, body, angiography, cardiology, breast, oncology, and pediatric imaging.* Increasing the breadth of studies that can be performed and reducing the need for patients to be referred elsewhere often leads to increased volumes.

Frankfort Regional Medical Center had a more than ten-year-old MRI system, which was proving to be ineffective for many applications. “We were basically down to doing shoulder and spine,” says Nancy Galasso, lead MRI technician. “But now, our volume is increasing because we can do so much more. We’re even seeing an increase in referrals from physicians outside of our facility that didn’t refer to us in the past.”

Northwest Medical Center’s referrals have also increased. “We saw about a 50% increase in referrals in the first month,” says Desquitado. And, it has taken referrals away from its biggest competitor, which is 17 miles away. This ability to obtain referrals from physicians both inside and outside a hospital can lead to increased volumes that can ultimately correlate to an improved bottom line.

The addition of the MAGNETOM ESSENZA as well as the support Frankfort Regional Medical Center and Northwest Medical Center have received from Siemens has made a significant impact on patient care and convenience at both hospitals. “We’ve had a great experience with the people

from Siemens. Everybody in our hospital knows our Siemens representative by his first name. He’s like one of our employees,” says Walter. “We love the system. You know, any time we can help the people in our community, it’s a benefit not only to the community but also to our hospital.”

* The safety of imaging children under two years of age has not been established.

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