

Making a Case for the SOMATOM Emotion

The long list of benefits reported by the staff at Northside Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, since five new SOMATOM Emotion scanners were installed in January 2008 reads like a testimonial – from exceptional images and increased throughput to patient satisfaction and financial benefits.

By Sameh Fahmy



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Carolyn J. Weaver, MD, Radiologist at the Northside Hospital in Atlanta

With 14 imaging facilities spread across a large metropolitan area, Northside Hospital in Atlanta, GA, needed a CT solution that would reliably and efficiently allow its staff to image a large volume of patients with a broad range of medical needs.

“Our goal is to make sure that our health-care is convenient and patient focused, while also providing our referring physicians with high-quality imaging, regardless of location,” says director of radiology services Deidre Dixon.

Northside originally had a variety of single-, four- and six-slice CT scanners at its facilities and sought to upgrade with a solution that would provide superior image quality, rapid workflow, and maximum return on investment. In January 2008, after a collaborative decision process, they chose to install five Siemens SOMATOM® Emotion CT scanners. As a result, Northside has been able to expand its imaging services while gaining efficiencies and measurable financial benefits from faster workflow. “We were looking for a workhorse scanner,” says radiologist Carolyn J. Weaver, MD, “and the SOMATOM Emotion has proven to be just that.”

The 16-Slice Choice

Weaver says the hospital’s previous scanners limited the protocols that Northside could offer at some locations. “Configurations greater than 16 slices allow for cutting-edge applications,” she says, but Northside needed a scanner that could

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Deidre Dixon, Director of Radiology Services
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capably handle their day-to-day needs. “For basic outpatient scanning, 16-slice is a configuration that offers all the necessary protocols and offers them efficiently and with good diagnostic capabilities,” Weaver says.

In addition to superb image quality, Northside wanted a system that would efficiently handle its large volume of CT procedures. In 2007 alone, Northside performed more than 78,000 CT exams. The expansion of services after installation of the SOMATOM Emotion 16 systems has also resulted in a financial benefit to the group by increasing patient volumes. One imaging center, for example, increased patient capacity by 71 percent after upgrading from a single-slice scanner to the SOMATOM Emotion 16. The ability to expand services and increase throughput aren’t the only features that boost return on investment. Another reason is that the SOMATOM Emotion has an economical price/performance ratio and minimum lifecycle costs. The SOMATOM Emotion has the industry’s lowest power supply demand, requiring 70 kVA versus 90 to 100 kVA for other vendor’s 16-slice scanners. Its low heat dissipation of less than 6.8 kW also reduces cooling costs compared to competition.

Fast Installation and Minimal Down Time

Northside Hospital clearly isn’t alone in choosing the SOMATOM Emotion. As

of July 2008, more than 6,000 customers have installed the system, making it the most popular CT scanner in the world. In many cases the SOMATOM Emotion can be installed in only three days while, in contrast, many other scanners require more than a week to install. Longer installation results in greater patient rescheduling and inconvenience. The ease of installation is facilitated by the remarkably small, 18 square meter (194 cubic feet) footprint of the system. Weaver says the compact gantry design also creates a more relaxing environment for patients. “Anytime a patient sees something that is overwhelming in size, particularly in proportion to the room it’s in, it creates anxiety,” Weaver says. “And that could make it more difficult to get an IV and make the whole experience more difficult.”

Downtime can be costly for hospitals, but Dixon points out that it is also a major inconvenience for patients. “If a patient has taken a day off work to have a CT and comes in to find that there’s a machine issue, it not only impacts us but, subsequently, also the patient,” Dixon says. “Even if we’re able to get the machine up that same day, we’re left with customer dissatisfaction.” The SOMATOM Emotion was built with reliability in mind, and has not disappointed the staff at Northside. “We’ve never had any problems with it since we’ve had it here,” says radiology supervisor Reginald Moultrie. “It’s great.”

Advice to Other Facilities

With their purchase behind them, administrators and technicians at Northside Hospital are now realizing the benefits of a decision that was truly collaborative. Dixon recommends visiting many sites and asking users about downtime and how well scanners perform day-to-day. Image quality must meet the expectations of radiologists, and she recommends choosing one vendor so that technologists can easily share information and support each other. The amount of support a vendor offers in optimizing applications is important, too, she says.

“We feel that partnership is a key component of the vendor selection process,” Dixon says. “We want to feel that the vendor has knowledge of our core business strategy and based on that knowledge can suggest products that fit within our organization to make sure patients receive the best care possible. We’re very pleased with our collaborative relationship with Siemens.”

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Further Information

www.siemens.com/somatom-emotion