



Improving Patient Care with Siemens OPENLink

State University of New York
Upstate Medical University

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The University Hospital of the State University of New York (SUNY), Upstate Medical University is central New York's only academic medical center and the region's largest employer. Located in Syracuse, the 350-bed teaching hospital has several outpatient clinics and is a Center of Excellence for Oncology, Cardiovascular Services, Neurosciences, and Pediatrics.



A Growing Need for Interoperability


SUNY Upstate is a Siemens Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE) site and has several other Siemens systems, including INVISION®, Pharmacy, and Lifetime Clinical Record® (LCR). In addition, interoperability has always been a top priority at SUNY Upstate, and its staff has been using Siemens OPENLink™ as its integration solution since 1997. "Siemens OPENLink has been a key component of our integration strategy and continues to support our interoperability needs as our organization grows and expands," says Charles Ferris, senior integration analyst at SUNY Upstate. In the past two years SUNY Upstate has experienced tremendous growth and has seen an increased number of requests and requirements for interoperability. Ferris attributes this to a shift in the industry toward a "best-of-breed" approach, in which organizations focus on purchasing specific modalities and specialized equipment that need to be integrated into existing systems. SUNY Upstate currently has nearly 50 interfaces and the need for system integration continues to grow. It uses Siemens OPENLink to connect 12 individual systems including lab, radiology, respiratory therapy, and cardiology. Ferris expects that number to increase to 20 systems in the near future as the organization grows and functionality increases. "As we move toward our goal of a true electronic medical record, Siemens OPENLink will continue to provide the connectivity necessary to help get us there."

Doing More with Existing Staff

Using Siemens OPENLink helps reduce costs and enables the IT staff at SUNY Upstate to be more productive. "Typically, the more interfaces you need, the more time you spend building and maintaining them," says Ferris. "With Siemens OPENLink, this is no longer a cumbersome and time-consuming process. We can build and maintain the interfaces ourselves, saving us the substantial costs of paying someone to do it for us. On average, a staff member can build an ADT interface in one day. Order and results interfaces can also be built in just a few days. Without Siemens OPENLink, these interfaces would take weeks and significant costs to complete. Because it is not a lengthy, labor-intensive process, we are able to free up valuable resources and do more with the staff we have."

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Charles Ferris
Senior Integration Analyst
SUNY Upstate Medical University

 **We see a way to reduce the time physicians spend waiting for radiology results from 6 hours to less than 1 hour**

Proven Outcomes in Results Reporting

One example of how Siemens OPENLink delivers true value to SUNY Upstate is in the area of radiology results reporting for physicians. Radiologists send reports to the radiology system using a voice recognition digital transcription system. Final reports are then sent via an outbound interface to LCR and the Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS) for physician viewing, but preliminary reports are not. “Because we are a teaching hospital, the wait for a final report can be substantial, sometimes many hours or up to a day, due to the level of review necessary. The physicians repeatedly requested that the preliminary reports be sent immediately to LCR and PACS so they can avoid the lag time and access the results without delay,” says Ferris.

When SUNY Upstate’s staff members attempted to build this functionality into the system they realized that reports were coming over from transcription in a block of text and LCR could only receive the reports in smaller text segments. A recently released “user exit” feature available through Siemens OPENLink was the answer. Ferris explains, “Our staff was able to add a function that transformed the block of text into a properly formatted transaction that could be sent easily to the LCR system. The end result is that the physicians got what they asked for and are now able to view preliminary results earlier. Physicians used to wait from six to eight hours to see preliminary reports, and they are now able to access this information in less than one hour. We believe this is helping us improve patient care by enabling physicians to make more informed and timely care decisions for their patients. In an ER or trauma situation, getting these results into the hands of the physicians faster really can make a difference in patient care.”

Future Outlook

Outstanding technical support and active user groups have also enhanced SUNY Upstate’s experience with Siemens OPENLink. “It’s a productivity tool for our organization that just keeps getting better and better,” says Ferris.

To learn more about how Siemens OPENLink can help you improve patient care at your facility, contact your Siemens representative or call 1-888-826-9702.

Proven Outcomes. This is what Siemens is helping to deliver right now. Outcomes that result from truly efficient workflow. Outcomes that improve your bottom line. Outcomes that lead to a level of care that feels exceptional to the patient and the care provider. Proof positive of the value of integrating medical technology, IT, management consulting, and services. In a way that only Siemens can.

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