

The Medical University of South Carolina Cures Mounting Backlog of Paper HR Files with Large-Scale Scanning and Digitization Services

Growing Workforce Created Massive Headache for Records-Management Staff

As the Medical University of South Carolina's (MUSC) number of facilities and patient population grew, so did its workforce, eventually creating a huge backlog of paper human-resources files. Thousands of documents on active and inactive employees— many well beyond their required retention dates—created headaches for the people charged with records management.

Just ask Kim Duncan, MUSC's current payroll services manager who previously served as manager of HR operations.

Here are just a few of the challenges she faced:

- The ability to locate records depended on manual processes, such as having a record of who last touched it and where he or she placed it, which often led to human error;
- Documents were filed by employee last name, which did not allow for quick searching for other information, such as date of employment or termination;
- Valuable square footage in the high-rent downtown Charleston area was being used like a warehouse;

- Records weren't easily accessible to staff not located near the storage room;
- If records were damaged or destroyed by a hurricane or flood (not uncommon in Charleston), they could never be replaced; and
- Keeping records past their retention date created legal risks since MUSC would have to produce these documents if requested for litigation.

Although the HR staff could manage scanning new records, they did not have the manpower to digitize the huge backlog of paper documents that had accumulated over time and through facility acquisitions. With file rooms bursting at the seams, MUSC considered moving some documents to an off-site warehouse, but that created concerns about accessibility and document security. That's when they turned to Docufree for help.

Docufree Handles Enormous Digitization Task in Just Two Months

With more than 45 years of experience in document management, Docufree had the resources and expertise MUSC needed to turn what would've been an enormous task for staff into a roughly two-month project.

Docufree has worked with thousands of hospitals to secure millions of medical records, including HR files, patient

records, credentials and other mission-critical documents. The company has helped hospitals become paperless so that they can improve the patient experience, gain staff efficiencies, and mitigate risk.

As an example, one mental health system in North Carolina had more than half a million paper files, requiring two full-time employees just to fulfill document requests. Staff didn't even know what they had. They just knew it was overwhelming. Docufree was able to destroy roughly 215,000 files that were beyond their retention schedule, which reduced the scanning costs significantly. And, the mental health system was able to redeploy the two staff members to more productive work.

Bulk digital scanning is one of numerous services offered by Docufree, either on-site or in its high-security facility. Docufree can also scan microfilm and microfiche so that all records are searchable in the same digital format.

The process starts with a pilot or proof of concept using one or two boxes of files to confirm that the finished scanned data meets the client's expectations and can be integrated into the hospital's information system. From there, the client can opt for on-site scanning or turn everything over to the Docufree team.

"We touch every page of every record, tag each file and determine what can be shredded securely and what needs to be scanned, and we create a complete

“We were able to convert the previous storage space into cubicles for five people. When we compared the cost of scanning to the cost of office space in downtown Charleston, it was a no-brainer. The return on investment made it an easy decision. I also appreciated the team’s focus on customer service and reliability. When you’re handing over all of your records to someone, there’s has to be a lot of trust.”

- *Kim Duncan, MUSC’s current payroll services manager who previously served as manager of HR operations*

disposition manifest,” said Docufree Account Manager Richard Ouzts, “This creates documentation needed for HIPAA compliance and assures the client every record is accounted for and tracked throughout the process.”

Docufree prides itself on having meticulous full-time staff members who are incentivized to provide 100-percent accuracy.

MUSC Staff See Document Retrieval Times Drop from Days to Seconds

At the end of the process, files are accessible to anyone who has the user rights from their desktop. Document retrieval time drops from days to seconds, and there is no need to worry about a document getting misplaced or misfiled. And in a disaster, the backed-up files can be recreated.

With MUSC, Docufree picked up all the HR files and moved them to its facility in Pineville, N.C., where the team logged, tagged, prepped, and scanned every document both required and not required to be retained. The team also indexed those documents for searching, created a master data file and securely routed everything back to MUSC to be imported into its existing system.

“The outcomes of that project were pretty simple,” Ouzts said. “Now, MUSC has a disaster recovery plan, no more lost or misplaced files, and instant access for all authorized personnel who need it. Going forward, the staff can now keep up with the volume of new documents coming into their office.”

According to Duncan, “We also converted the previous storage space into cubicles for five people. When we compared the cost of scanning to the cost of office space in downtown Charleston, it was a no-brainer. The return on investment made it an easy decision.”

Duncan also appreciated the team’s focus on customer service and reliability. “I really like the people, their business model and how they motivate their employees. It’s like a family business. When you’re handing over all of your records to someone, there’s has to be a lot of trust. I would absolutely recommend them.”