

Texas Radiology Associates' Patients Benefit from Faster Diagnoses, Thanks to Healthier Network from Time Warner Cable Business Class

WAITING ROOMS ARE APTLY NAMED.

Anxious toe-tapping and finger-drumming are the norm in emergency rooms and doctors' offices, where patients and family members fretfully await diagnoses of and treatment for various injuries or ailments. Nervous, exhausted or just ill, those seeking treatment are understandably adverse to lengthy delays in service.

Fortunately, in recent years, the advent of picture archiving and communications systems (PACS) has hastened the diagnosis phase. PACs enable medical facilities to transmit vital data – such as ultrasound, MRI and CT scans – across a high-speed network, where they can be accessed and assessed by medical experts.

Texas Radiology Associates (TRA), based in Plano, has been a pioneer in the use of PACs to quickly connect injured or ill patients with the best medical experts, be they across campus or miles away. And TRA's new telecommunications partner, Time Warner Cable Business Class (TWCBC), has helped TRA maximize its remote diagnostic capabilities and further reduce wait times.

"Radiologists want to quickly receive studies and interpret them, so they can quickly send their findings back to the emergency rooms and imaging centers," said Alex Celan, founder and president of Med IT Associates, which provides IT support for TRA and other Texas-based radiology groups and medical imaging centers. "Obviously, the shorter the wait, the better for everyone."

In recent years, however, as PACs technology improved and remote review and diagnosis of vital records became the norm, TRA was increasingly hampered by the speed – or, more accurately, the lack of speed – of a previous provider's network bandwidth connection.

According to Celan, TRA was using a traditional telecom solution – a copper-network based T-1 / frame relay connection that delivered bandwidth speeds of no more than 1.5 Mbps. That moderate speed was sufficient in the early days of PACs, but as volume and the data requirements grew so did the need for broader bandwidth to enable faster transmission.

"Especially in an emergency, our goal is to get results back as fast as possible," said John P. Mulloy, MD, of TRA. "And faster diagnosis and treatment means better outcomes for patients."

Realizing its legacy T-1 system would ultimately hamper the likelihood of speedy and accurate patient service, TRA – on the advice of IT specialist Celan – decided to explore other networking options. They settled, quickly, on TWCBC, which delivers broadband service over a wholly-owned high-speed fiber network with transmission speeds more than seven times faster than T1 speed.

"When transporting critical healthcare data, reliability is the most important factor. Speed is a close second. With our fiber-based solutions, we were able to accomplish both," said Brent Keating, senior account executive, who manages all of TWCBC's healthcare accounts in North Texas.



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Alex Celan
founder and president
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TWCBC installed a point-to-multipoint Metro Ethernet solution for five of TRA's remote facilities as well as Dedicated Internet Access to its host location in Plano. According to Celan, the transition was smooth and TRA – and its patients – reaped immediate benefits.

"The connection has been rock solid, and the increased bandwidth has allowed our radiologists to provide their findings back to the emergency rooms and imaging centers faster than ever before," said Celan.

Mulloy added that the switch-over from the previous network provider to lightning-fast TWCBC was easy. "We had a very smooth transition, and the added bandwidth using fiber has dramatically decreased the amount of time we spend transmitting emergency examinations for review," he said. "That means the doctors get results back significantly faster than before."

And, if TRA continues to grow or add new facilities, TWCBC's scalable fiber network can quickly be reconfigured to provide even faster connectivity speeds – ranging from 10 Mbps to 10 Gbps. That means shorter waits, faster diagnosis and timely treatment, added Celan.

"As you can imagine, the ultimate beneficiary of a fast, accurate diagnosis is the patient."

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