

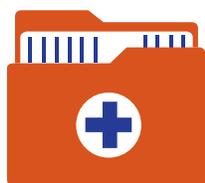
Digital Transformation Requires Secure and Seamless Access to Patient Information

Technology can support the transition from paper to digital.

Within today's healthcare environment, patient-identifiable data is rapidly transitioning from paper-based records into digital form with the adoption of electronic health record systems (EHR). One key benefit to this change is enabling healthcare professionals to serve care and treatment goals more quickly and efficiently than ever before. At the same time, the industry is confronting a host of new security, privacy, and compliance challenges. All combined, it's no wonder that healthcare professionals are overwhelmed by the many issues surrounding the access, management and use of this data.

As patient records transition from their prior life as paper-based charts, documents, and notes, healthcare professionals will need to rely on a mix of patient documents in a variety of formats – printed, scanned, and even faxed – wherever and whenever they are needed.

A patient record may be printed at a nursing station. Lab results from an outside testing facility can be faxed to a device somewhere in a department or office. Handwritten patient transfer details from a skilled nursing facility must be made easily accessible before they can be viewed by clinicians. Unrecovered print jobs or faxed documents can allow unauthorized access, risking security and privacy while delaying timely care.



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Shifting to digital

Every healthcare environment has unique issues surrounding the secure distribution and use of patient information. Among them are the challenges of using both digital and paper-based documents as organizations make the transition to EHRs.

Organizations may have a handle on using each document type independently, but managing the transition from the physical to digital and the integration of the two can significantly impact an organization's workflow.

To secure scanned documents, a simple approach is to convert these into secure PDFs. Many devices with scanners can create a PDF that needs a four-digit PIN, ensuring the document cannot be opened without permission. Scanning documents securely can protect the document from unauthorized access and is just another tactic that organizations can employ as they transition to electronic records.

For more advanced digital workflows, sharing documents using secure scan-to-email can send documents securely as soon as they are scanned. This would allow secure data sharing between a lab testing facility and doctor's office, or sharing documents securely between different hospital departments. Additionally, this method helps establish a private and safe data stream, helping a secure-minded healthcare organization keep its entire network more secure.



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Upholding security

It is essential that connected devices transmit and receive patient data securely. Office equipment with the ability to lock specific functions can help prevent unauthorized user access. More importantly, this capability enables administrators to decide who can do what with each machine and each machine function. This can include allowing access to machine functions and setting page limits through unique PINs or near-field communication (NFC) access cards.

For example, delaying output until a PIN is entered by an authorized user who is present at the machine prevents sensitive print jobs or faxes from sitting unattended in output trays of shared devices, creating a data breach and a potential liability.

Restricting use and limiting functions to specific users or groups using features such as device locking functions, imposing device access using password protections, or NFC access cards can go a long way to help ensure the security of your organization's patient data and records.

Maintaining compliance

A basic policy for compliance enforces a "clean-desk" practice to ensure that confidential data cannot be viewed by unauthorized people. This extends to all shared devices so that every possible protection is in place, covering the organization's data use and critical workflows. This approach also requires security procedures to prevent sensitive original documents from being left on devices.

Healthcare environments face many challenges to incorporate security and privacy requirements across digital and paper records while at the same time be effortlessly efficient. A combination of thoughtful policies with the right technologies can help provide a secure method for dealing with both physical documents and digital records.

Brother offers healthcare organizations a range of solutions that can integrate with a variety of leading healthcare management systems. These options can help ensure the proper handling and secure transmission of data to the appropriate repositories and enable easy access to those who need to work with them.

Brother products and solutions can help facilitate the process of bringing paper records into digital formats and help healthcare organizations move forward in the use of EHRs within their information management practice, while at the same time meeting critical regulatory and compliance requirements.

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