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TOSHIBA SPEEDS AND STREAMLINES RECORDS MANAGEMENT FOR EMS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Customer: EMMCO West, Inc.
Country: USA
Industry: Healthcare



Emergency Medical Management Cooperative (EMMCO West) oversees Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for seven counties in northwestern Pennsylvania. To cover those seven counties, EMMCO West coordinates 130 EMS agencies employing more than 5,000 EMS Practitioners. The challenge is this: How to manage seven years' worth of certification and continuing education paperwork for all those practitioners, and respond to requests for that paperwork in a turnaround time that meets the needs of the fast-paced emergency medical field?

The Toshiba e-STUDIO2500c multifunction product (MFP), e-STUDIO720 MFP and e-BRIDGE Re-Rite Optical Character Recognition (OCR) solution melded perfectly with EMMCO West's filing and record tracking objectives. Together, the e-STUDIO MFPs and e-BRIDGE Re-Rite software have virtually eliminated a



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– Chris Heile,
EMMCO West's assistant director

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cumbersome manual process for supplying certification paperwork to a phone call, and has eliminated the need for digging through a wall of file cabinets, making and storing multiple copies, and sending out hard copies by U.S. post—while dramatically raising the level of customer service EMMCO West offers its EMS agencies.

Ask EMMCO West's Continuing Education Specialist Melissa Thompson what constitutes the back wall of her office. "File cabinets. It's a wall of file cabinets," she says. Housed within this wall of cabinets is paperwork documenting the continuing education of more than 5,000 EMS practitioners working in the seven Pennsylvania counties served by EMMCO West.

To provide high quality emergency medical care to the residents and visitors to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, practitioners must update their CPR training every two years and remain current in other training. Each completed course earns a certificate or updated identification card—and to remain eligible to work in Pennsylvania's EMS system, an EMS practitioner must ensure that these documents are on file.

These documents arrive at EMMCO West in a number of ways: delivered by hand, by mail, by fax, or from an internal source. In the past, Thompson would receive these documents and file them as hard copies. Then, if questions arose about a missing documentation, she would manually search the files to locate the missing documents. It was rarely that simple. Says Thompson: "In the past, a practitioner would call and say he faxed his CPR card two months ago. But I'd check and it would not show up in his records. There was no good way to go back and verify that we received it."

And often, when an EMS Instructor would call the EMMCO West office requesting outlines for individual training sessions, Thompson couldn't immediately locate the file, or the particular document. "I'd usually have to say, 'can I call you back? I need to look up those files. And then when I did find the document, it would often be several generations old.'" And that difficult-to-read document spawned an even worse copy.

In 2006, Chris Heile, EMMCO West's assistant director, sought an electronic replacement for the company's records management system, as well as a better process for receiving and sending out those documents. Jay Verno, president of Hagan Business Machines of Meadville, Inc., worked closely with Heile and recommended the perfect solution for EMMCO West's unique business needs. Verno and the Hagan team's ideal solution was the Toshiba America Business Solutions' e-STUDIO line of MFPs and proprietary e-BRIDGE Re-Rite

OCR software. With Hagan Business Machines' professional expertise leading the software and hardware installation and training, Heile and Thompson have found great success with transitioning to a digital document workflow format.

"Now, if we receive a fax, maybe from the Department of Health, it comes in electronically," says Heile. "We can turn that document around and get it back out to 130 EMS services in a matter of five minutes." That same document is now stored electronically—as is all the educational documentation on those 5,000-plus practitioners.

"For me, the benefits are in document tracking and accountability," says Thompson. "Before, I had to go through each piece of paper in a file to see if I could find the CPR card. Now it's simply a word search." For records received prior to their installation of the e-STUDIO units, Thompson scans as needed. When the file copies are damaged or old, she uses Toshiba's Re-Rite software to clarify unreadable information. "Now when I get a call, I ask if I can send them the documents by email. And I usually just scan the outline in, use Re-Rite to correct some of the data that isn't legible, and email it out. I don't have to retype everything or send unreadable copies." And best of all, virtually all requests can be satisfied in the span of the phone call.

So, that wall of file cabinets? "Can't get rid of it just yet," says Thompson. While it doesn't make sense to scan every piece of paper in those files, EMMCO West foresees a day when their file system will be 100-percent electronic. "We have to keep records for seven years, so in five-and-a-half years, that 'wall of cabinets' is gone."

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