blueprism® | **East Suffolk and North Essex NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Digital Workers Free NHS Staff Time, Patients Benefit

Business Impact

£220,000
Savings across the organization

500+ hours
Staff time reallocated for direct patient care

20 to 5 minutes
Time to process each referral reduced

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Patients entering a hospital want to know they will receive the highest quality of care. The East Suffolk and North Essex Foundation Trust (ESNEFT), part of the UK's National Health Service (NHS), is committed to delivering this care. It strives to provide cutting-edge services to all patients entering exam rooms. So, the Trust has innovated its patient care model by digitizing services with intelligent automation and artificial intelligence.

"Our Trust has a philosophy that time matters. Using Blue Prism Cloud's intelligent automation platform has released time for our medical secretaries. This gives them more time to speak with patients on the phone or solve problems for doctors, nurses and other team members. Our staff has more time to make a difference, which improves our patients' care and experience."

Darren Atkins
Chief Technology Officer,
ESNEFT

Challenge

Eliminating paper from business processes is not only good for the planet, it's good for the staff who handle the paper. When the NHS instituted a "paper switch-off" program, it meant that ESNEFT had to switch all general practitioner (GP) referral submissions from paper to the Electronic Referral Service (eRS).

Patients experiencing an issue with their health visit their GP first. If needed, the GP refers them to a hospital within the Trust. After a patient receives a referral, hospital staff gathers, downloads and prints all of that person's data, including items like scans, blood tests and test results. The packet is collated, scanned into a single PDF document, and uploaded into the administrative system.

With 2,000 referrals coming in per week, each taking roughly 20 minutes to process, medical assistants were stuck under an avalanche of paper. And, it took valuable time away from supporting consultants and patients. Not only was the manual process slow, it cost the Trust around £220,000 per year to maintain.

Solution

Blue Prism intelligent digital workers were brought in to actively monitor incoming eRS referrals from GP patient appointments. When a referral arrives, the digital worker extracts the reason for the referral, gathers the supporting clinical information and merges the information into a single pdf document. The digital workers at ESNEFT have highly secure access, so they can upload the PDF into the Trust's administrative systems using virtual, smart-card technology. All of this activity is completed within minutes. Once the information has been added to the hospital systems, the digital worker passes the information to the lead consultant for review and grading.

ESNEFT'S philosophy is "time matters." This motto is clearly represented in the Trust's approach to automation. With the flick of a switch, digital workers have sprung into action to speed up the GP referrals process, reducing the completion time from 20 minutes to just 5 minutes. Medical secretaries now have more time to perform important tasks like interacting with patients and driving internal improvements.

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