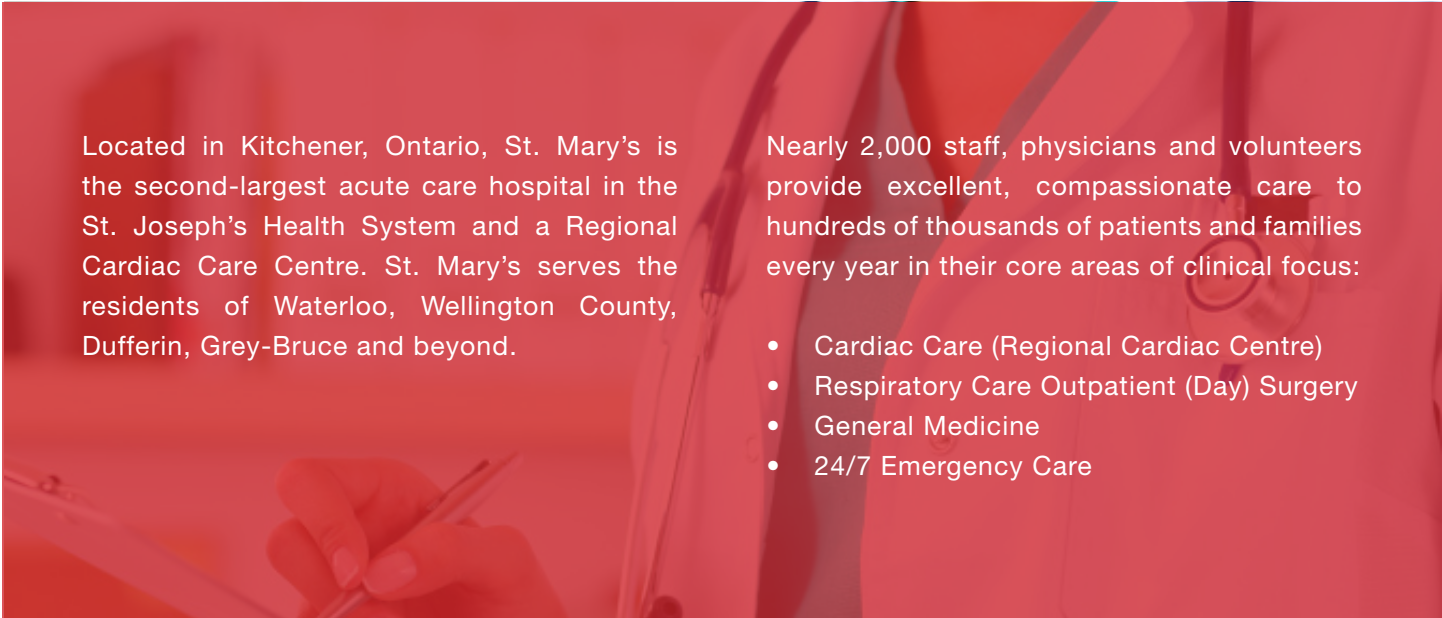# St. Mary's General Hospital Brings Efficiency to Report Distribution

Every night, at a late hour when other areas of St. Mary's General Hospital were quiet, a batch report from one its labs would start printing – and printing – until there were as many as 500 faxes waiting to be taken out, folded and distributed throughout the next day. The onerous nature of this process is just one example of what prompted the organization to explore an automated Electronic Report Distribution System (eRDS) that would bring greater efficiency across its workforce.

Located in Kitchener, Ontario, St. Mary's is the second-largest acute care hospital in the St. Joseph's Health System and a Regional Cardiac Care Centre. St. Mary's serves the residents of Waterloo, Wellington County, Dufferin, Grey-Bruce and beyond.

Nearly 2,000 staff, physicians and volunteers provide excellent, compassionate care to hundreds of thousands of patients and families every year in their core areas of clinical focus:

- Cardiac Care (Regional Cardiac Centre)
- Respiratory Care Outpatient (Day) Surgery
- General Medicine
- 24/7 Emergency Care

The Customer

Based in Kitchener, Ontario, St. Mary's General Hospital is the second-largest acute care facility in the St. Joseph's Health System, with close to 2,000 staff, physicians and volunteers who serve residents across Waterloo, Wellington County, Dufferin, Grey-Bruce and beyond. It is well known as a regional Cardiac Care Centre.

According to Michael Borman, Interim Manager, Information Systems and Information Technology at St. Mary's, the organization is also a strong proponent of Lean – a methodology for continuous improvement that aims to reduce waste while creating greater value for customers and employees.

"As we started going through the Lean Process, we began discussing how the faxing of reports across various departments was not considered efficient," he says. "Compared to typical IT projects where we might look at simply replacing our fax machines when they're at their end of life, Lean thinking meant going further to identify what's the root cause, the actual issue, that's creating those inefficiencies? Replacing a technology is one thing, but identifying the gaps within the process is another."

The Challenge

Borman and his team worked in collaboration with each department and uncovered several key issues. This included a high volume of paper usage involved in faxing reports, which incurs cost and has an environmental impact. There were also unique use cases or needs between the automated batch reports of the lab, for instance, versus the health records department which tends to do more ad-hoc faxing and scanning. More than anything, perhaps, was the time and energy involved for some staff. "They felt their skills could be better utilized." Borman says.

The Solution

Borman says it was difficult to find a solution provider with the right mix of technology and expertise, given that St. Mary's needs included faxing medical records generated by MEDITECH and in particular the automated fax delivery of Cardiac PACs reports to the ordering and sub physicians.

"What we found is that these were too specific to MEDITECH and some that would only do a portion of what we need. That's when we stumbled upon PFI," he says. "They were not only able to offer us a multi-system solution, but one that would integrate with the systems that we had."

Over the course of about half a month, a team of three from Process Fusion Inc, helped deploy its eReports (eRDS) solution, which gathers clinical medical reports, determines the content and then applies business rules to deliver the documents based on those rules. Output captured includes information from St. Mary's clinical system through HL7, Print Stream and MFP.

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Michael Borman, Interim Manager, Information Systems & Information Technology, St. Mary's General Hospital

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The Results

"PFI understood the scope and the needs of each area and guided the process. They were very hands-on in the approach to make sure that they were meeting the business needs," Borman says. "They were really good. I don't remember one situation where they couldn't do what we needed."

Improved collaboration: Lean thinking is predicated on breaking down the silos that sometimes exist in complex organizations, and St. Mary's use of eRDS is helping to achieve that. "Their departments worked with us very closely. We didn't make the rule changes for them – they identified the business rules, the gaps," he says. "We made sure the flow met their expectations."

Productivity: Before St. Mary's introduced PFI solution, some staff had to drive in on the weekends to manage faxes Borman says. "Now they can sit at home with their laptop and do the same thing. It's about allowing those departments to do work they need to be doing instead of jobs that can be automated."

Environmental footprint: "I love the outdoors and getting outside," Borman says. "Once you start reading how many trees a box of paper covers, it makes reducing our usage a high priority."

Next Steps

Since the original deployment, St. Mary's has continued the rollout of the eRDS to three other departments, including its purchasing area and its Integrated Comprehensive Care Program. Borman says there will likely be more to follow.

"There's a lot of opportunities here," he says. "We've only touched the tip of the iceberg."

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