

MultiCare Health System Has Brought Visibility and Accountability to a Once Unmanageable Process

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Laird Pisto
MultiCare Health System
Associate General Counsel



➤ Six years ago, MultiCare Health System, the leading healthcare provider in the greater Tacoma, Wash. market, faced a problem similar to that of many hospitals and health systems nationwide.

"MultiCare is a very well run organization, but we were really guessing at how many contracts we had," said MultiCare Associate General Counsel Laird Pisto. "Prior to MediTract, we knew they were out there, but we could not find them. Often, we found that there was no accountability or contract oversight. With MediTract, we can readily determine who is responsible, what the status is, when it will expire and who is responsible for making the decision to renew, extend, terminate, etc. I really can't imagine working in the hospital industry without MediTract – it has brought transparency, visibility and accountability to our contract management process."

MultiCare is one of a growing number of hospitals and health systems that have turned to MediTract, the nation's leading healthcare contract and document management provider, serving over 20 percent of the nation's hospitals. The company is by far the dominant provider in the healthcare contract and document management business, serving more than 1,200 hospitals and 5,000 related facilities. MediTract is a division of TractManager, Inc., a national Internet-based technology firm specializing in secure, real-time access to customized and centralized contract and document management systems.

In fact, MultiCare is recognized as a national healthcare leader because of its commitment to information technology on many levels. MultiCare President and Chief Executive Officer Diane Cecchetti, RN, was one of just three healthcare executives nationally to receive the CEO IT Achievement Award for 2008 from Modern Healthcare magazine and the Healthcare Information and Management System Society.

"MultiCare wanted greater control and accountability of all contracts so we looked at a handful of companies and MediTract was leaps and bounds ahead of the competition," Pisto said. "One of the reasons they clearly stood out was because MediTract was designed specifically for healthcare companies by executives who had years of experience in healthcare and understand the complexities of the business. They also had an extremely strong vertical and horizontal

security system that allowed us to get very specific with the amount of access each user is permitted."

MultiCare has grown significantly in the last decade and now includes four hospitals, numerous primary care and urgent care clinics, multi-specialty centers, hospice and home health services, and many others. Today, MultiCare has more than 8,000 full time employees and is the area's largest provider of health care services, serving patients at 93 locations in Pierce, South King, Kitsap and Thurston counties.

As a growing organization with many sites, MultiCare faced numerous accountability and efficiency challenges in contract management.

"We discovered during the transition to MediTract that different MultiCare departments and divisions had 19 separate contracts with one vendor – all with different terms, rates and expiration dates," Pisto said. "We were not getting any pricing benefits on volume. But today we have come full circle with these types of issues because service contracts just don't get paid unless they are in the MediTract database."

MultiCare uses MediTract for all service contracts and agreements including those managed by the legal services, corporate compliance & internal audit and finance departments on a daily basis. MultiCare Contract Support Specialist Diana Lawlis said that when the health system first started using MediTract six years ago it had a database of approximately 2,000 contracts and roughly 100 registered users. Today, MultiCare has over 4,000 contracts and documents on the database and over 300 users.

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MultiCare uses MediTract to track compliance with the regulations of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other state and federal regulations.

“Demonstrating compliance with HIPAA and Safe Harbor regulations is extremely important,” said Pisto. “Violations can result in serious warnings, fines and even loss of non-profit status in some cases. And The Joint Commission has published new rules that require even greater contract oversight for the management of vendors involved with direct patient care, so MediTract is extremely important to these efforts.” MultiCare also uses the technology for routine management and oversight of contracts, monitoring physician-hospital relationships, internal and external audit functions, bond financing due diligence processes and many other uses.

“MediTract also serves as a major disaster recovery system for us since all data is stored outside our disaster zone,” Pisto said. “If one day an earthquake does hit, we will be well prepared from a contract management perspective.

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MediTract’s staff built the initial MultiCare contract and document database by scanning and uploading all of the health system’s existing contracts and documents using HP Digital Senders. Once the initial load was complete, HP scanners were provided for the ongoing processing of adding new contracts and documents that need daily uploading.

During a database load, thousands of pages are scanned in a very short period of time, producing high quality digital Adobe Acrobat PDF images in a password protected database that can be accessed by as many users as an organization chooses. The security levels built into the system are adaptable, meaning that organizations can limit the amount of access each user is permitted.

The MediTract patented technology processes scanned documents, extracts key data elements and loads them into the appropriate location in the database. The software monitors the key data elements and sends e-mail alerts to appropriate staff, for example, when contract expiration dates are approaching. The technology offers a series of views and functions performed against the database, thereby tailoring the system to meet the requirements of each department.

Multiple users from many sites can use the database at the same time since it is Internet-based. Pisto said MultiCare recently affiliated with another hospital and that during the due diligence process, there were more than 50 attorneys at a wide range of locations examining documents.

“As part of the affiliation we had the other hospital’s contracts and documents loaded into the database,” Pisto said. “Not only did we save thousands of dollars in copying and overnight delivery expenses, but we greatly expedited the due diligence process. The same holds true during bond due diligence and internal and external audits. Our staff cannot imagine how they operated without MediTract.”



It's All About The Service

ABOUT MEDITRACT

MediTract is the leading contract management service provider serving the healthcare industry exclusively. The company currently serves hundreds of hospitals and healthcare systems at thousands of locations nationwide. MediTract’s software and services help healthcare professionals regain control of their contracts and reduce the cost of doing business by providing the tools necessary to improve management’s visibility of contractual obligations, enhance compliance and streamline workflow.