

Internal & External Consults: Streamlining the Process



Cut Waste and Increase Quality of Care with New Technology

I'm sure you've thought about it. Every time a package arrives at your pathology practice, it represents a patient anxiously waiting for results at the other end.

What would happen if you could significantly reduce the time it takes to return an opinion? How would your practice benefit if you could reduce the costs involved?

The pathology world is increasingly grounded in subspecialties. Smaller hospitals and pathology practices are turning to external

subspecialty experts to provide the diagnostic expertise required for more complex diagnoses. Utilization of these resources can add both time and unnecessary waste into the process unless properly managed.

Is unnecessary waste built into your process?

When you need the assistance of an expert opinion, you probably ask your support person to send the case to the consultant. It's a simple request. But how much time does your staff actually spend pulling tissue blocks and slides, making recuts, copying reports and packaging everything for transport?

And how much time does the consultant's staff spend to unpack the material, line up the slides in a folder with the report, accession the case into their lab information system and deliver the material to the office?

Once the case has been completed, the process must be reversed, and the clock continues to click while the patient and their physician wait for their results. In addition, your consultant must cover his or her support costs. You pay more for the service, and ultimately, so does the patient.

How can you improve the timeliness and quality of patient care while reducing overall costs?

Corista's [digital pathology platform](#) provides an effective solution to eliminate both the time and waste related to subspecialty opinions. This is a challenge for many pathology practices and worth exploring here.

This digital pathology platform creates a "hub and spoke" network between the expert center (the hub) and referring organizations (the spokes).

Let's say you need an opinion from a subspecialty expert. Your staff scans your glass slides producing whole slide images. (You don't need to buy special hardware. The Corista platform works with all whole slide image scanners.) The case is accessioned into the system and - with the images attached - is now available for review at the hub. The triage administrator in the specialist's practice reviews the images to ensure they are of diagnostic quality and assigns the case to the appropriate subspecialist. The case is then immediately available for review by the appropriate pathologist at the hub.

If the hub pathologist wants to review the case with a referring pathologist, the system provides both synchronous and asynchronous image viewing with real-time messaging. When a diagnosis is made, the report is immediately available to the referring pathologist.

With this process, there is no waiting for packaging or couriers. What used to take as much as two weeks can now be completed in a matter of minutes in a STAT case or just hours for a regular consult. Waste,

delays and cost are removed from the process, and the patient gets the expert opinion they need as quickly as possible.

Anxious moments waiting for an answer are reduced, and any necessary treatment can begin. The combination of the right technology and the right expertise means getting the right doctor on the right case for the right patient at the right time.

For more information about the Corista DP3™ System, read Frost & Sullivan's report announcing their award of the Digital Pathology Product Innovation Award for 2014.