

# Paperless Anesthesia Record Increases Efficiency, Improves Communication and Helps Promote Quality Care at Central Washington Hospital



Central Washington Hospital, a private, not-for-profit community hospital located in Wenatchee, Wash., serves as the major medical facility and referral center for north-central Washington. Dedicated to the delivery of excellent, cost-effective healthcare, Central Washington Hospital stands out among its peers as a financially well-managed institution. Central Washington Hospital selected and implemented Picis perioperative solutions to better meet its mission of responding “to community needs by providing quality health care through caring, competence and accountability.”

## Quick Profile

### Central Washington Hospital

**Institution profile:**

205-bed community hospital with 12 operating suites

**Key business/clinical drivers:**

Help optimize patient care, improve efficiency and better manage costs by automating all aspects of perioperative care, including anesthesia and operating room management

**Picis solutions:**

Picis Anesthesia Manager, Extelligence Anesthesia, Preop Manager, OR Manager, PACU Manager, Quality Manager, Extelligence OR and SmarTrack®

**Interoperability:**

Integrated with Cerner® for ADT, billing and labs

**Results:**

- Automatic capture of data during intraoperative processes, saving significant time
- Reduces record retrieval time by up to 10 minutes per case
- Enhances record legibility
- Improves communication resulting in more efficient use of OR resources
- Helps meet PQRI, SCIP and CMS compliance requirements
- Streamlines billing processes



### ► Improving Information Flow Across the Perioperative Continuum

In November 2008, Central Washington Hospital implemented Picis perioperative solutions to unify the clinical documentation, as well as business and financial functions of its perioperative processes. Picis solutions are helping Central Washington Hospital improve the flow of information across the perioperative continuum of care while decreasing repetitive documentation and phone calls, increasing staff efficiencies, and improving communication. This automation is particularly important in managing the complex documentation involved in the intraoperative anesthesia record. Picis Anesthesia Manager provides Central Washington Hospital with an automated anesthesia information management system (AIMS) that produces a more complete, accurate and legible anesthesia record.

### Optimizing the Anesthesia Record

Picis Anesthesia Manager ensures a consistent flow and availability of patient information throughout the patient care chain. Anesthesia Manager is used for online care documentation in Central Washington Hospital's 12 operating rooms as well as in several other locations, including labor and delivery, diagnostic imaging, and the catheterization laboratory. Automating the anesthesia record helps anesthesiologists promote quality of patient care, streamline the anesthesia process, simultaneously document multiple data inputs from medical devices, better meet compliance and billing requirements, and save time and money.

### Getting Physicians On Board

Realizing that physician participation and buy-in is essential for the success of any AIMS implementation, Central Washington Hospital leveraged Physician Adoption Services from Picis before going live with the system. As part of this service, an experienced anesthesiologist from Picis provided on-site consulting, training and support for the clinical staff. This innovative service eased the transition to the paperless anesthesia record and promoted physician adoption of Anesthesia Manager's automated documentation.

"The Picis anesthesiologist moved from one operating room to another and gave one-on-one attention to all our physicians," said Jeb Sorom, MD, Director of Cardiac Anesthesiology at Central Washington. "In the process, physicians who were less technologically savvy were identified and extra attention was given to help bring them up to speed. As a result, when the go-live date came, everybody felt comfortable working with the system."

Central Washington also initiated an evening computer lab to help ease the transition from the paper record to the AIMS. Physicians could go to the lab and become familiar with the

system in a low-stress environment without the added pressure of caring for patients at the same time. This helped the staff become more comfortable with the electronic documentation process before system implementation.

### Making More Time for Patient Care While Cutting Costs

Anesthesia Manager automatically documents critical patient data from physiological patient monitors, hospital data systems and care delivery devices. This leaves more time for patient care since it eliminates the tedious, cumbersome and repetitive task of manual documentation.

"There is a definite time and cost savings attributable to Anesthesia Manager," said Dr. Sorom. "This is particularly noticeable with large vascular, thoracic or cardio cases where I'm putting in lots of lines and doing invasive procedures. I don't have to go back and enter data such as blood pressures, heart rates and so on. It's captured for me. This makes documentation much easier, faster and more efficient."

On large cases, Dr. Sorom indicates that up to 45 minutes are spent working through procedures with the patient (e.g. administering lines) so prior to implementing Anesthesia Manager, Dr. Sorom would have had to manually reconstruct documentation for that entire time period. However, now with Anesthesia Manager, patient data is automatically captured. "It frees me up to watch the patient and be more attentive to exactly what's happening in the operating room," he said.

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### Increasing Record Accessibility Saves Time, Helps Clinicians Enhance Care

With Anesthesia Manager, clinicians can electronically chart and access the patient record at any point throughout the perioperative process. This helps increase the amount of time clinicians have for care of the patient. "Record access is greatly improved in our paperless environment," said Dr. Sorom. "With the paper record, we had to wait for record retrieval, which could take anywhere from minutes to hours, and then dig through the paperwork to find what we needed. With Anesthesia Manager, we have immediate access to the record everywhere along the patient care chain from the preop examination all the way through to the post anesthesia care unit (PACU)." Dr. Sorom also pointed out that electronic access to past anesthesia records is helpful in preparing for scheduled surgeries. "If I'm in the OR, I can access records for upcoming cases so that I'm ready when I care for the patient."

Another important benefit of the AIMS is documentation legibility. "I no longer have to track down my colleagues to decipher handwriting," said Dr. Sorom. "This is particularly important when it comes to airway issues, where, on the



- ▶ paper record, space was limited and clinicians would sometimes cram information into one small corner. It was often very frustrating trying to figure out what they wrote. I remember at times taking a paper record to a colleague and asking ‘what happened here?’ With a computerized system, it is easy to access and read that information. This is a huge benefit that saves time and eliminates confusion.”

Anesthesia Manager is also helping facilitate the sharing of anesthesia information throughout the hospital. For example, the diabetes care team can access the anesthesia record for diabetic patients to study outcomes management.

### Complying With Regulatory Requirements

Anesthesia Manager helps practitioners comply with the Physicians Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI), Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP) regulations through consistent documentation practices. “Using one-button macros, we are able to record when antibiotics are administered and document the intraoperative warming of the patient,” said Dr. Sorom. “In addition, we use event sets to automatically comply with other PQRI, CMS and SCIP requirements, such as documenting central line placement, following safety checklists and correctly completing all the discrete elements required for postoperative notes.”

### Taking the Guesswork Out of Case Management

Central Washington Hospital has replaced its white board with Picis SmarTrack, an interactive tool that tracks the status of all perioperative cases. SmarTrack not only provides OR management with intelligent patient tracking but also helps clinicians improve productivity, utilize OR resources more efficiently and achieve better case management.

“Before we implemented SmarTrack I had to make phone calls, walk around the OR and peek in doors in order to figure out the status of certain cases,” said Dr. Sorom. “With SmarTrack, I can now see a snapshot of the whole operating room: which cases are under way, which patients have checked in, which cases have finished, and who’s staffing those cases. If a case is going longer than it should, I can remotely log in and see what’s going on in order to anticipate when that case is going to finish. This is a huge benefit in managing my staff and running the schedule.”

### Streamlining the Billing Process

Anesthesia Manager has enabled Central Washington Hospital’s anesthesia practice to dramatically improve its professional fee billing. Before Picis, the anesthesiologist had to enter a dozen or more data elements on a paper billing sheet and mail that, along with a copy of the face sheet, to



- ▶ the billing company. Anesthesia Manager now optimizes this process by creating a complete billing report that requires little data entry since most information is automatically downloaded from the AIMS. At the end of each day, all cases are compiled and electronically sent to the billing company as a PDF. The result: Manual data entry is decreased, data accuracy is improved and the time and effort required to issue a bill is compressed.

### Looking to the Future

Adopting the paperless anesthesia record has helped to streamline and modernize the anesthesia documentation process at Central Washington Hospital. The benefits delivered by Anesthesia Manager are particularly clear because the anesthesia group works regularly at another facility where they still use a paper anesthesia record.

According to Dr. Sorom, “The biggest difference with the paper record is that I do a lot more busy work. I have to write the same information—such as my name, the surgeon’s

name, the case, and the diagnosis—over and over again in several places including the anesthesia record, preoperative notes and the billing sheet. This is especially frustrating when there are multiple short cases where I spend a lot of time writing duplicate information. I much prefer Anesthesia Manager to the paper record.”

In addition, Central Washington Hospital is always looking for new and better ways to use technology to improve performance and help us promote quality patient care. “We’re planning to take the next step with our professional fee billing,” said Dr. Sorom. “We are going to build an interface that will directly transmit discreet billing data from Anesthesia Manager to the billing system. This will eliminate the need for the billing company to extract data from the PDF billing report.” In addition, Central Washington Hospital sees the system’s flexibility as a way to keep up with changing health care regulations and requirements. “Compliance requirements continue to evolve, and we’re confident that Anesthesia Manager can help us keep pace,” said Dr. Sorom. ■

### About Picis

Picis, an Ingenix company, is a global provider of innovative solutions that enable rapid and sustained delivery of clinical documentation, financial and operational results in the emergency departments, surgical suites and intensive care units of more than 2,100 hospitals in 19 countries. For more information about Picis, visit [www.picis.com](http://www.picis.com).

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