

Need an X-ray?

Find out how improvements in NHG Diagnostics can give you quicker and cheaper results.

When National Healthcare Group (NHG) Diagnostics first started in 2001, its vision was to provide X-ray and laboratory services that are cheaper, faster, better and safer. As outlined by General Manager, Dr Tyrone Goh, "We want to do it better than all the rest, and faster than anybody else."

Conceived to support primary healthcare, NHG Diagnostics has grown from three to 18 diagnostics satellites within a span of five years. It has expanded to reach out to a wider community in the healthcare arena. Last year, it took a big leap in info-technology by embarking on filmless technology and Teleradiology for radiology and a fully integrated Laboratory Information System. All laboratory and X-ray results are available within an integrated Cluster Patient Report Sharing (CPRS) system.

The introduction of the Laboratory Information System (LIS) integrates all the diagnostic laboratories in the NHG cluster, such as Alexandra Hospital (AH), National University Hospital (NUH), Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTS) and NHG Diagnostics at the polyclinics. The Radiology Information System (RIS) and Teleradiology allows electronic image transmission across NHG hospitals and private radiology providers locally and internationally.

FAST, CHEAP & CONVENIENT

So what are the benefits? Dr Goh explains: "Let's say a patient in Ang Mo Kio polyclinic has a

lab test done. The same test results are available wherever he goes, whether in NUH, AH or Yishun polyclinic."

Patients do not need to have their tests repeated and can save themselves the hassle of carting around test results as it is now available instantaneously and electronically.

In the past, it could take up to two to three working days for patients to have their X-rays read. But with teleradiology and three X-ray reading centres in Singapore and one in India, patients can now get their X-ray images read within one hour. Similarly, X-ray reports are also available throughout the cluster via the CPRS. This has negated the printing of films and thus saves on film cost with cost-savings passed on to the patient.

GOING MOBILE

NHGD has acquired a mobile mammography unit affectionately known as "The mammobus", from the Breast Cancer Foundation. It does a regular circuit to various heartlands and corporate client headquarters for breast cancer screenings.

"Some patients may not be so forthcoming about having these tests done for cultural, modesty or family reasons, even though there is a polyclinic nearby, so we decided to bring the service to their doorsteps, enhancing accessibility," explains Dr Goh.

NHG has gone a step further by introducing a \$300,000 mobile X-ray service that is fully self-contained with equipment for digital X-rays. There is a built-in area for the radiographer to be shielded and a work space to process and print



Advancements in filmless technology have resulted in digital X-rays, which is cheaper, faster and more convenient.

hard copy digital images. There is also provision for the handicapped and elderly with a built-in hydraulic lift. Best of all, the mobile X-ray service is fully customized and requires only electricity to 'plug and play'.

REACHING OUT

Last year, diagnostic services were installed in institutions and specialist centres other than polyclinics. There are now diagnostic centres at Ang Mo Kio-Thye Hua Kuan Hospital, NUS Health & Wellness Centres for NUS staff and students and Jurong Medical Centre. These initiatives have made diagnostic services more convenient and accessible to patients.

DID YOU KNOW?

NHG's "Filmless environment and Teleradiology" project, where X-rays are stored, transmitted and read either locally or internationally, was awarded the Merit Award (Private Category) at the National Infocomm Awards in October 2006.



The Mammobus is a fully contained mobile mammography service.