Back(scan) to the Future
How Forest Park Medical Center Eased Its EMR Transition with Turnkey Scanning of All Paper Records

About AMES
Founded in 1919, AMES is the largest U.S. provider of medical records systems, medical file folders, and medical records storage solutions for health care facilities. The company is part of TAB Products Co. LLC, the premier global supplier of products and services for records management.

The Challenge
Health care facilities face multiple difficulties in migrating to electronic medical records (EMR) systems to meet the U.S. government mandate. A critical question: What about legacy records? One Dallas hospital found a quick, responsive and efficient third-party solution.

Forest Park Medical Center in Dallas, Texas, is a rapidly expanding full-service, acute-care hospital. Erica Buckley, RHIA, Director of Health Information Management (HIM), had several projects underway simultaneously to transition the facility into its EMR future. She was faced with the predicament of quickly running out of storage space for her paper-based records.

Paper records had to remain readily accessible, given Forest Park's stellar satisfaction ratings. Yet Ms. Buckley lacked the staff hours necessary to organize and scan her paper records efficiently within the required timeframe.

Proposals from service bureaus, a software vendor, and a dedicated record scanning firm left her concerned about scanning performed offsite, patient privacy, error rates, schedules, and per-page rates with a myriad of potential add-ons.

The AMES Advantage
- Fast, turnkey backscanning project
- Inclusive estimate of total costs
- All work completed onsite
- Unbroken access to all records
- Multiple quality checks for industry’s lowest error rate
“Down the road, I could end up with thousands of dollars in extras that I really didn’t anticipate. I just couldn’t be sure what I would end up paying,” Ms. Buckley explains.

*Fortunately, one company provided a reassuring alternative.*

**The AMES Solution**

AMES was already furnishing Forest Park’s HIM Department with high-quality folders, labels, index dividers, and shelves. AMES, as an organization, has also emerged as a leader in EMR transition services. Ms. Buckley was given a tour of another AMES backscanning project then underway in Fort Worth, TX. AMES precisely surveyed the scope of the Forest Park project and provided an impressive quote.

“It was an all-encompassing proposal, versus per-page,” Ms. Buckley says. “So I knew exactly what I would pay. When I presented the proposal to my administrators, they were not apprehensive about the cost.”

Ms. Buckley was sold. In mid-March 2011, AMES set up shop at Forest Park and went to work.

“I really appreciated that they were willing to come onsite. I liked the fact that my records weren’t across town, or across the state,” Ms. Buckley recalls. “If we needed to access a record anytime during the process, it was right there. That’s rare.”

AMES implemented a meticulous process of preparing each file and scanning it (at 300 dpi versus the standard 200 dpi), with three separate QC steps to meet the company’s goal of zero tolerance for error.

“Because of their quality checks and their review process, they were able to confirm the accuracy of the records before they were converted into an electronic format,” says Ms. Buckley. The whole project went so smoothly that the HIM staff, which will scan the newly generated paper records going forward, adopted critical processes from the AMES workflow.

**The Results**

The AMES backscanning project began in mid-March 2011, and was completed in just 7 weeks.

To sum up the Forest Park project, AMES took the facility from a paper-based record to an electronic-based record in a very short period of time — and solved every problem along the way, on schedule and on budget.

“When our EMR system went live in May, we had every piece of information on every patient completely electronic,” Ms. Buckley says. “We’re really pleased.”

“After the conversion, we were able to recover office space previously used to store records, which was great,” Ms. Buckley concludes. “But the primary thing is: It was just not realistic for my staff to scan our existing paper records. We would have been behind from day one. So for me, finding a turnkey solution that enabled us to have our paper record already scanned into an electronic format before EMR implementation was just invaluable!”

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