

# IMAGING ECONOMICS

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Inglewood Imaging Center, LLC  
211 North Prairie Ave #E  
Inglewood, CA 90301

phone: 310-672-9729 • fax: 310-672-9720  
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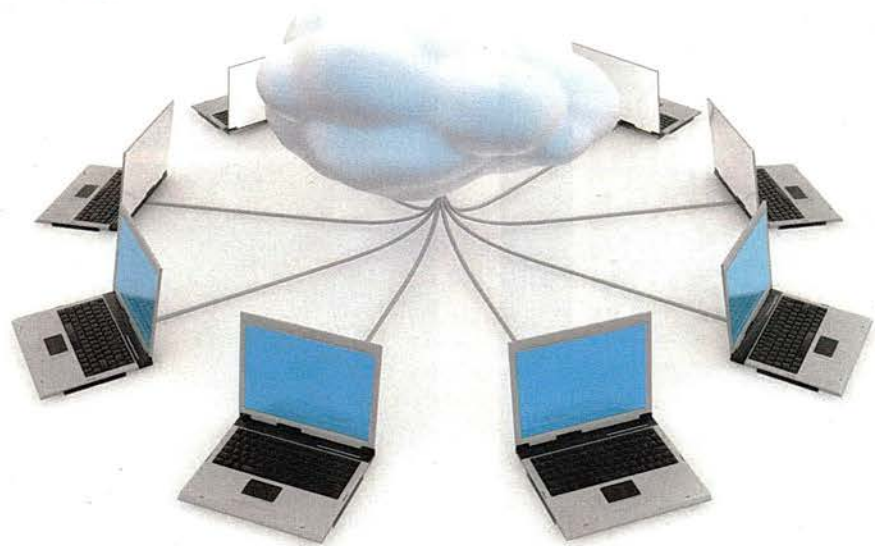
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# IMAGING INFORMATICS

Managing the Flow in Radiology



## Delivering Better Care with Cloud and Connect Technology

By Bradley Schmidt

**W**hen people think of innovation, integration, and efficiency, Inglewood, Calif, is probably the last city that comes to mind. Yet, as the founder and CEO of Inglewood Imaging Center, LLC, I've seen us evolve into the region's top performing outpatient radiology center by embracing change, putting the physician and patient first, and delivering top-notch technology to one of the poorest and most costly regions in the United States.

Our region of central Los Angeles has never been a top choice for imaging centers looking to set up a new location. We had a vision to bring compassion, technology, and innovation to an amazing population of underserved patients and referring physicians. Serving this community of 2.5 million with cutting-edge technology helped address a need of hundreds of local providers, clinics, and medical groups. With radiologists on-site, we provide final reports the same day without having to send for services off-site. Straightforward as they are, our commitments to quality and speed have brought us a great reputation among local doctors.

We were aware of the challenges of serving this traditionally neglected community, however. Physical location is a big consideration for all imaging centers, where patients need to come in person to receive services. Imaging centers often set up shop in more affluent and connected areas to address this, but our area of Central Los Angeles County is still widely fragmented. Our goal was to be the glue for advanced care by becoming the region's radiology center of excellence. The region's challenges couldn't be overcome completely, but we could start to address them with cloud-based tools that put the information directly in providers' and patients' hands.

We began by taking a portable approach to radiology images and reports. With the help of cloud-based PACS vendor Infinitt, we streamlined our image transmissions by generally eliminating printed film and streaming it directly to our computers without the need for printed images or downloaded PACS viewers. An estimated \$30 billion is spent nationwide on duplicate exams and tests each year, and cloud-based re-

sults help cut down on these unnecessary costs while bringing more reliable patient care.

Once we had these results, we needed a reliable way to deliver them to providers and patients, especially with upcoming Meaningful Use Stage 2 requirements. Meaningful Use has big implications for imaging centers, with requirements that physicians must receive at least 10% of their imaging test results through a certified electronic health record (EHR) technology. This effectively means that imaging centers need to find a way of connecting to their clients online, or potentially find their clients going elsewhere to avoid penalties.

Practice Fusion, a free, web-based EHR, presented a rapid, comprehensive solution allowing us to drop completed result files into the physician's EHR inbox instantly. With the unique API-based connection, it took less than a month to offer our services to all providers on their platform, helping us to both connect our existing clients and gain visibility among other providers on the Practice Fusion platform, thousands of whom will be searching for connected imaging centers to fulfill incentive requirements at the start of 2014.

A big goal of ours is to not only make the workflow easier for the doctor, but also better engage patients. Since Practice Fusion has a connected patient portal, patients are able to log in online to see the results of all their tests. This helped us address some of the difficulties of transportation in our LA County area by allowing patients to receive and review results without visiting a physical location.

Over the last couple of years, we have been fortunate to personally visit over a thousand medical offices and talk to doctors directly about the evolution of care and our services as a pioneering virtual radiology leader. In spite of all the challenges of our location, innovative solutions have allowed us to not only survive but also thrive as a business, all while remaining committed to providing the best services available to a community that needs it.

*Bradley Schmidt is the founder and CEO of Inglewood Imaging Center.*