8 Tips to Incorporate POCUS into Enterprise Imaging Programme

The use of Point-of-care Ultrasound (POCUS) has been consistently increasing in recent years. The Society of Radiologists in Ultrasound and representatives of the American College of Radiology's Commission on Ultrasound defined POCUS as "the sonographic evaluation of a patient performed and reported in a patient evaluation and management encounter."

Healthcare facilities that use the enterprise imaging programme could benefit from a POCUS-inclusive EI adoption. Here are eight tips for incorporating POCUS into either a new or established EI programme:

1. POCUS is relatively new and unfamiliar

When implementing an Enterprise Imaging programme, it is important to keep in mind that POCUS is still new for many people. There are still healthcare professionals who advocate and believe in retaining the "traditional image" of radiology. The first thing to focus on is to reduce the hesitation or apprehension about POCUS and ensure healthcare teams work together and support each other when implementing a POCUS-incorporated EI solution.

2. Ensure proper adoption of POCUS protocols

Since this is still a relatively new technology for many, there have been issues related to saving and storing POCUS images. It is important to ensure users capture, store and save images appropriately and according to HIPAA regulations. A good idea might be to have ultrasound technology handle the image acquisition process. Agfa HealthCare also recommends good stewardship to ensure standardisation and maximum benefits from this tool.

3. Ensure proper governance structure

Good governance is critical for the effective implementation of enterprise imaging. Any EI programme that is based on a strategy and vision that is supported by the key stakeholders and that is implemented with a prover governance structure is not only easy to implement but also more acceptable to the people who will actually use it.

4. Establish POCUS workflows

One of the biggest challenges is to develop workflows that run across the enterprise and allow each POCUS-using department to work according to their preferences. When implementing POCUS-integrated EI, it is important to allow clinical departments to drive workflow development as this will allow their preferences to be included, and the desired state workflow can be achieved.

5. Establish universal medical terminology

It is important to establish and use universal medical terminology. Agfa HealthCare's EI team has standardised nomenclature for nearly 250 point-of-care imaging exams. It is important to standardise anatomical labelling. The Society for Imaging Informatics in Medicine has already taken the lead in pushing for progress with EI nomenclature, which Agfa HealthCare also strongly supports.

6. Keep the EI interface simple and inviting

Physicians do not have the time to deal with complicated software. They want minimal interaction with the application software they are using. That is why the EI interface should be simple, thus ensure their screen time is easy, quick and seamless. If it's too complicated, the adoption rate is likely to be low. The goal is to make things simpler for physicians, not more complex.

7. Provide support to POCUS users

Many POCUS users do not do traditional reporting like radiologists and cardiologists. They just make notes in the EMR. Also, there are bound to be varying competencies and skill levels with so many users within a system. Therefore, it is important to provide support to POCUS users so that they become more agile and more familiar with how the application works.

8. Ensure learning flows both ways

While POCUS users have much to learn from radiology and cardiology, these traditional guardians of imaging data can also feed off concepts emerging in POCUS management. In order to realise the full potential of enterprise imaging, learning will have to be both ways.

Source: Agfa HealthCare

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