
Sweden's Västra Götaland Region Strengthens Connected Community with GE Healthcare

Known for Gothenburg's impressive harbor and canals and its picturesque coastline and countryside, the Västra Götaland region (VGR) is Sweden's second largest, with over 1.5 million residents. It is also home to one of Europe's most innovative and connected healthcare communities where a network of diverse radiology systems, named the BFR (Bild och funktionsregister), serves all of the region's 17 hospitals, including Northern Europe's largest. Teams of healthcare providers, including referring physicians and specialists, share access to radiology images and reports through the secure BFR system, provided by GE Healthcare IT for the last five years.

At the World of Health IT Congress in Budapest, Hungary, GE Healthcare IT announced an extension of its contract serving the region through 2015. GE Healthcare IT also announced it's expanding and enhancing the solution through several new software applications, including the eHealth Image Exchange platform and Centricity® Enterprise Archive. This expanded access gives more patients the benefit of obtaining inputs from remote specialists and allows their care teams to seek second opinions seamlessly in order to create a more holistic patient care plan.

Since 2006, GE Healthcare IT's BFR solution has supported multiple Picture Archiving and Communication Systems (PACS) and Radiology Information Systems (RIS) from different, competing companies. GE's work with VGR reflects the company's commitment to healthymagination which supports delivering health innovations focused on reducing costs, increasing access and improving quality around the world.

With the bi-directional eHealth Image Exchange platform, GE is now integrating industry standards into VGR's architecture. GE's data registry and repository (DRR) services use the XDS standard profile developed by the Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise initiative (IHE). Authorized care team members can access patient data stored in the repository using any vendor's system that supports the XDS standard, which increases the ease of access for clinicians and enhances clinical collaboration.

"One of the reasons we chose to expand with GE is the flexible, standards-based eHealth Image Exchange platform. We are committed not only to providing the best care possible today, but also in the future. That requires implementing a robust platform and working with an organization like GE, which focuses on driving innovation and new technology" says Lars Lindsköld, BFR System Owner. "GE is a player in the global arena and also is a part of the global standardization organization, both of which are essential for continuous improvement and for understanding healthcare IT complexity and managing its changes."

The GE contract expansion also includes the introduction of Centricity Enterprise Archive's Information Lifecycle Management (ILM) application. The ILM enables VGR to implement a standard archiving process across all 17 hospitals, which will allow VGR to make more cost effective use of the service's "storage cloud." This centralised management allows one-step control of variables such as storage period, image compression ratio and management of tiered storage.

"VGR is a leader in connecting care teams across a wide region to provide better healthcare for all citizens, which is the future of healthcare," says Bernard Algayres, General Manager of GE Healthcare IT eHealth, EMEA. "At VGR, it's not a future defined by industry pundits but the real here-and-now, enabled by GE Healthcare IT solutions. Moving to this next phase of the BFR system project offers the promise of better of care at lower costs for the citizens of Southwestern Sweden."

Published on : Mon, 23 May 2011