

# RISLinQ™ Streamlines Outpatient Imaging Business Operations

Comprehensive | Streamlined | Customized

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**Your outpatient imaging business faces unique operational demands. Reimbursement has been slashed by up to 50 percent over the last several years, resulting in razor-thin margins. The current economic climate exacerbates the already tenuous situation...**

Consequently, efficiency throughout the imaging chain—from ordering to scheduling to billing—is essential. Outpatient imaging practices require solutions designed to help them maintain and grow profits and build a solid referral base. Accurate and accelerated billing processes also boost the bottom line by reducing duplicative paperwork and tightening the billing cycle.

These challenges are amplified in the outpatient PET/CT market. Although PET/CT imaging has been available for more than a decade, clinical understanding of the modality and its role in decision-making is still evolving. Developing and maintaining a solid referral base is critical to success in the PET/CT arena.

Outpatient imaging businesses across the country report that a fully integrated RIS/Billing/Collection solution offers a robust toolset to help them manage the business challenges of the 21st century. PET/CT providers add that solutions optimized for PET/CT imaging deliver key competitive advantages.

Consider for example RISLinQ's fully integrated RIS/Billing/Collection solution. Specifically

designed for outpatient imaging practices and optimized for PET/CT and nuclear medicine, RISLinQ delivers a robust solution. It reduces paperwork and manual data entry, enhances efficient communication and also offers a marketer's gold mine of sophisticated, quantitative marketing tools for analyses. Practices across the country report that RISLinQ provides a smart, next-generation solution that streamlines outpatient imaging business processes.

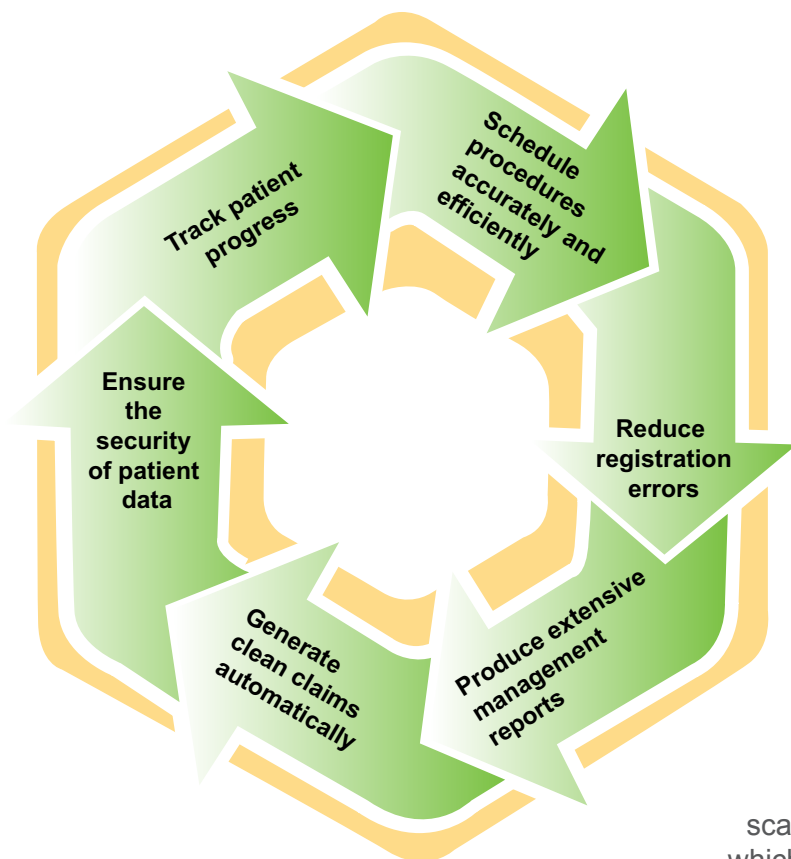
### IMPROVING THE HIGH-VOLUME, EXPERIENCED PRACTICE

Metro Region PET Center in Annandale, VA, operates one of the busiest single camera PET/CT practices in the country, completing 17 to 25 studies daily. The practice opened in 1999 prior to PET/CT reimbursement and has weathered most of the operational challenges of running an efficient, patient-centered business in the last decade.

Until recently, Metro Region PET Center had one business challenge that remained unanswered. It could not find a fully integrated RIS/Billing/Collection solution to meet its business needs. In May 2009, the center started utilizing RISLinQ; the new solution not only meets the center's current needs, but also provides a solid platform for the future.

***Specifically, RISLinQ provides paperless connections among the links in the imaging chain, and it delivers robust marketing capabilities designed for 21st century challenges.***

The goal of the deployment was simple, says John Zurita, Manager, sales and marketing at Metro. "We wanted to streamline processes from



patient data entry to billing.” In the conventional outpatient PET/CT practice, various units function independently—and inefficiently. Front desk staff input patient data, which are printed for technologists, who re-input data again at the PET scanner acquisition station. Billing uses previously entered patient data to complete the billing process and must manually catch any issues. Each step increases the risk of a data entry error. “RISLinQ helps us take the manual steps out of the equation to remove barriers to efficiency,” explains Zurita.

RISLinQ re-invents business processes, infusing efficiency throughout the system. After patient information is entered into the application the first time, data are shared among all imaging and billing systems within the practice. “It minimizes the risk of human error and increases practice efficiency. “Upon complete implementation of RISLinQ, Metro Region PET Center expects to increase the efficiency and accuracy of patient data entry,” shares Zurita. RISLinQ improves billing, too, as it automatically

applies CPT and ICD-9 codes based on the patient’s statistical information and type of cancer. Information is continually updated throughout the system, giving the practice a detailed, real-time understanding of payments and accounts.

Similarly, scheduling is centralized and streamlined. Metro Region PET Center uses RISLinQ to solidify its relationships with referring offices by allowing them to request appointments via a web-based referring physician portal. Through the use of a drop-down menu, RISLinQ transfers general patient data from referring practices online, which eases the referral process. RISLinQ also generates automated alerts for follow-up scans and provides online bill-pay options, which helps the practice retain patients, says Zurita. In a conventional RIS configuration, the referring physician needs to remember to manually order each pre- and post-treatment and monitoring study. RISLinQ helps ensure that follow-up studies are ordered and scheduled at Metro Region PET Center.

Zurita envisions tremendous possibilities with the RIS/Billing/Collection solution. “The current economic climate demands data-driven marketing,” says Zurita. The typical RIS is not conducive to informed sales and marketing decisions. Many require multiple manual searches to access the demographic and statistical data essential to marketing success.

RISLinQ, in contrast, offers automated data mining. Zurita plans to use the fully integrated RIS/Billing/Collection solution to evaluate the impact of the center’s marketing initiatives, which includes educational dinner lectures and case study overviews. Using a list of attendees, the practice will mine data in RISLinQ to quantify the impact of its lectures. Adds Zurita,

“It won’t be manual or anecdotal. We’ll use RISLinQ to calculate the impact of marketing on referral patterns.”

## SUPPORTING THE GROWING PRACTICE

Space Coast Cancer Center in Titusville, FL, is an established, four-site medical oncology practice that embarked on an ambitious business growth plan in 2008. Last year, the practice added diagnostic imaging and radiation oncology services and deployed a state-of-the-art PET/CT system for hybrid imaging, diagnostic CT and CT simulation.

The practice’s plans called for a solid integrated RIS/Billing/Collection solution. When IBA presented its RISLinQ solution to Space Coast Cancer Center, the center decided to deploy the solution. “We wanted a cost-effective, easy to implement RIS solution that facilitates completely automated billing and registration,” shares Information Systems Manager Derrick Cantees. In less than a year, RISLinQ exceeded the practice’s expectations.

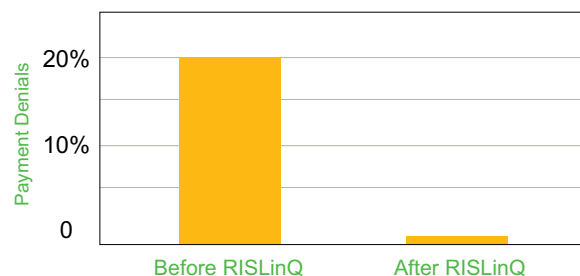
PETLinQ’s patent pending HL7 interface engine has enabled Space Coast Imaging to seamlessly interface RISLinQ into the systems already integrated in their imaging department. By using a real-time, bi-directional message feed, the oncology EMR system is able to push patient demographics into RISLinQ and receive the finalized patient schedule information back, quickly and efficiently with a no additional investment in personnel time. In addition to their EMR interface, RISLinQ has also successfully interfaced into Space Coast’s PACS, onsite dictation system and is fully enabled to interface with future referring physician EMRs.

Space Coast Cancer Center also uses RISLinQ to pre-populate its PET/CT scanner with modality worklists. Previous processes required

front desk staff to print out a daily schedule to share with technologists, who had to manually look up each patient and enter data into the scanner workstation. “The manual process is prone to human error, and it adds time to the diagnostic imaging process,” explains Cantees. In contrast, the paperless RISLinQ process increases productivity and accuracy.

## STREAMLINING THE MULTI-SITE PRACTICE

Diagnostic Imaging Services, a subsidiary of Tenet Healthcare, is a four-site outpatient imaging chain providing MRI, high field open MRI, CT, ultrasound, nuclear medicine, x-ray and fluoroscopy services in the New Orleans, LA, region. Since 2002, the practice has used RISLinQ as its integrated RIS/Billing/Collection solution. Over the last two years, Diagnostic Imaging Services has tapped into expanded features such as enterprise viewing, web-based scheduling and online billing tools to increase efficiency and productivity and accelerate the revenue cycle. One of RISLinQ’s most helpful features is the online advanced beneficiary notification feature, says Kathy Rabalais, Director of Clinic Services/IT.



**Since the practice started using the online eligibility checker, payment denials have dropped from approximately 20% to 1%.**

“The largest reason for eligibility denials was patients who weren’t members of the managed care plan that was submitted as their insurance coverage,” says Rabalais.

***With RISLinQ, insurance and registration clerks verify eligibility in real-time, eliminating time-consuming filing and re-filing of claims.***

Other billing-friendly tools include document scanning and electronic payment posting. Insurance cards and explanations of benefits are scanned once and housed electronically, which eliminates repeated copying of paperwork and simplifies billing because staff can locate information electronically. “Electronic payment posting is the largest improvement in the billing process,” continues Rabalais. Prior to this feature, it took billing staff eight hours to post government payments. Now, the facilities process takes one hour.

RISLinQ also improved operations on the front end of the practice. Centralized scheduling, for example, allows staff to easily locate the next available appointment. It also provides the practice with a dashboard view of operations. Rabalais can analyze trends by enterprise, facility or modality.

A final critical advantage is the web-based platform. “All data is backed up off-site,” explains Rabalais. “It’s very efficient because we don’t need to manually back up servers or worry about data loss in the case of inclement weather.” That’s especially important to a facility that weathered and survived devastating Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. Because of the web-enabled platform and off-site storage feature that RISLinQ provides, DIS was back to being fully operational one day after the hurricane hit, not missing a beat and still being able to provide quality imaging services to its community.

RISLinQ’s support remained available to DIS throughout the entire ordeal to make sure they remained functional in light of the devastation that hit the area.

After nearly eight years with RISLinQ, Diagnostic Imaging Services continues to use the fully integrated RIS/Billing/Collection solution to its full potential. Over the next few months, the practice plans to roll out patient portals to allow customers to pre-populate insurance forms and pay their bills, thus further boosting efficiency in front desk processes. After a successful pilot project, the practice also plans to deploy GeoLinQ, a real-time marketing tool, to facilitate market analysis. “We can review referral patterns, payments and better understand the local landscape, in order to make more informed decisions about how to effectively market our services”, sums up Rabalais.

## OPTIMIZED RIS/PACS

Michiana Hematology Oncology in South Bend, IN, a six-site practice that provides medical oncology, radiation oncology and gynecological oncology services, recently decided to replace its legacy RIS/PACS with RISLinQ and PETLinQ. “The practice set lofty goals for the new project and aims to eliminate paper while communicating patient information efficiently and effectively”, says Radiology Director Greg Quiroz. The new solutions will help the practice boost workflow and efficiency, and, at the same time improve service to the referring physician community. In addition, unlike generic radiology RIS/PACS applications, RISLinQ and PETLinQ are geared to private practices with imaging departments. It incorporates useful tools like fusion-savvy 3D reconstruction software, appropriately configured for private practice use.

Another RISLinQ advantage comes on the utilization front. “We find many physicians

underutilize PET/CT because they are afraid of overutilizing it,” says Chief Operating Officer Kim Woofter. In addition, many PET/CT providers report inconsistencies among referring physicians in the ordering process. Inconsistent orders increase the risk of suboptimal studies or other errors.

***RISLinQ allows the practice to use American College of Radiology (ACR) guidelines to integrate appropriate utilization of PET/CT into its care plans. That is, the practice can use RISLinQ to create standardized care plans that tell physicians when and how to use PET/CT in specific cancers.***

Woofter predicts increased utilization and more appropriate utilization of PET/CT with the standardized care plans. “Standardized order sets remove the margin of error from the ordering process,” adds Quiroz.

Michiana has also discovered that a highly unique advantage in using RISLinQ stems from its peer review functionality. Peer reviews play a critical role in supporting PET/CT quality assurance initiatives. With a few mouse clicks, the practice’s physicians can share questions about specific PET/CT studies with PETLinQ Chief Medical Officer, Robert Bridwell, MD, MBA and obtain feedback within 24 hours. “It’s an important capability for ACR accreditation,” notes Quiroz, “moreover, insurance companies are partnering with the ACR to support the use of tools that encourage quality PET/CT review.”

In addition to bolstering quality assurance via peer review, RISLinQ also enables access to the entire referring physician population. RISLinQ also provides secure access to referring physicians who desire to log on and review a patient’s file, at any time, from any place, with a

computer, internet access and secure log-in and password. The previous RIS/PACS required a substantial amount of paperwork and manual legwork to provide physicians with access to comprehensive reports and images. RISLinQ eliminates such frustration and helps to speed up needed access through its referring physician portal. Accessing the portal is fast, simple and convenient for its users. Quiroz concludes that “RISLinQ is more efficient for our staff, better for patients and helps build relationships with referring physicians,” sums Quiroz.

## ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN THE OUTPATIENT ENTERPRISE

Outpatient imaging centers face intense business pressure and require comprehensive business solutions to help them overcome various challenges, including increased efficiency, solid reimbursement and effective marketing. RISLinQ’s fully integrated RIS/Billing/Collection solution provides a comprehensive means of addressing these challenges and building business success. It enables paperless scheduling and billing, which increases efficiency and reduces human error. Its online, advanced beneficiary notification tool packs a major punch, significantly reducing insurance denials. Finally, RISLinQ offers a platform for data-driven marketing, helping practices efficiently analyze, inform and fine-tune their marketing program, which, in turn, builds business success. ■

## IBA Molecular North America, LLC

IBA Molecular is the #1 PET radiopharmaceutical provider worldwide. We are driven by the vision that Molecular Imaging has reached only a fraction of its full potential. As we collaborate with leaders throughout the world to develop the diagnostic imaging agents of tomorrow, we are committed to offering products and solutions aimed to help PET Centers achieve success and impact patients' lives today.

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## PETLinQ, LLC

PETLinQ LLC is a market leading, highly innovative technology company within the radiology space for the multi-modality outpatient and PET center space. It's #1 priority is to develop products that deliver uniform quality of care to the patient irrespective of the place of care. Its suite of products and services include image and report distribution/archiving, real time clinical peer review, radiology fusion workstations, Windows and Mac based RIS/Billing/Collections and a patent pending HL7 interface engine. Visit us at [www.petlinq.com](http://www.petlinq.com)

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