

DEVELOPING AN ERGONOMIC RADIOLOGIST WORKSPACE IMPROVES RADIOLOGIST HEALTH, QUALITY OF LIFE AND CONSULTATIVE CAPABILITY

Both radiologists and radiology administration across the Augusta University Health radiology department understood that all six of their subspecialty reading rooms needed a workstation update.

Radiologists and Radiology Residents were complaining of neck, back and wrist pain as they continuously adopted awkward positions and readjusted their seating positions to compensate for limitations in monitor and desk height adjustment. The inability to adjust the monitor height separately from the table height forced radiologists to stack monitors on books in order to approximate the correct monitor height. This practice raised safety concerns, while creating aesthetic and clutter issues. In addition, the limited range of motion of the manually adjustable table, and challenges from misplaced table crank handles, caused radiologists to adopt bad habits that directly contradict good ergonomic practices.

Radiology administration knew the obsolete and inadequate equipment was affecting radiologist health and quality of life, and was also hindering the radiologists ability to add consultative value to their everyday clinical contributions. The tipping point occurred when the radiology department implemented a new PACS across all Augusta University Health radiology subspecialties and settled on a new standard PACS monitor configuration. Layne Mitchell, Administrator for Radiology and Imaging at Augusta University Health, led the effort to gather input from radiologists and the PACS leadership team. Layne points out, "We took the time to gather as much feedback as possible from all users of the radiology reading rooms, not just the radiologists.

We used this broad set of inputs to ensure our goals reflected the diverse needs of the organization and the customers we serve."

Upon implementing 42 new ergonomically designed radiologist workstations across their neuroradiology, body imaging, musculoskeletal, pediatrics, general X-ray, and nuclear medicine reading rooms, radiology and IT support staff immediately recognized significant benefits. PACS administration and the IT support staff appreciate getting all IT system CPU's and cabling off the floor and out of the way of errant feet. This helped simplify technical service and system support, and reduced unplanned downtime from cables and power cords being accidentally disconnected by the cleaning staff or being kicked and tripped over by radiology staffers.

Dr. Norm Thomson, General Radiology Section Chief at Augusta University Medical Center, who reads daily at the new workstations and participated in the decision-making process, appreciates first-hand the value of investing in quality equipment for his clinical staff. "Our experience with the older furniture made us realize we needed to invest in the right workstations for our radiologists just as we had to invest in the right IT systems. All the pieces must work together to ensure the clinical staff can work efficiently and make the reading room welcoming to those who use our services." With the newly standardized monitor configuration at each new workstation being fully



Dr. Norm Thompson, General Radiology Section Chief at Augusta University Medical Center, enjoying one of their new ergonomic reading workstations.

adjustable, the radiologists can easily angle their display towards any visitor. This enhances the radiologist's ability to be a consultant and educator, and makes the individual reading locations more accessible.

Augusta University Health radiologists also wanted to adopt sit/stand desks, to reduce the risks of back and neck injury from sitting for too many hours. Because many of the workspaces are shared among radiologists, readjusting the old workstations was time consuming and was typically not properly performed. The new workstations include motorized presets for table and monitor height adjustment, which simplifies

changes in position and enables all radiologists to quickly and properly adopt healthy ergonomic seating and standing positions.

Dr. Thomson also understood that any new equipment had to last for upwards of 10 years, given today's budgeting challenges and IT system life cycle realities. He comments, "The quality and durability of the new RedRick equipment is very high. The attention to design details makes us feel confident that our new workstations will benefit our radiologists health and wellbeing, as well as job satisfaction, while looking as good in five years as they do now."



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