

# Relieving pains, receiving gains

*A Michigan hospital ends the paper chase with an IBM® solution from BlueWare Inc.*



From notoriously bad handwriting on a prescription, to detailed information on medical charts, to the dollars and cents of patient invoices, it's hard to imagine health care without scads of paper. Indeed, at MidMichigan Medical Center-Midland, the flagship hospital of MidMichigan Health, patient care used to be one big paper chase. Like other health care facilities, MidMichigan relied on paper documents to keep its business functions beating. And physicians affiliated with the hospital had to rely on a paper trail that could never quite keep up with their patients.

"People undergoing tests and treatment often move among the various care settings we cover in our region," explains Harlan Goodrich, Chief Information Officer, MidMichigan Health. "Medical records wouldn't immediately follow, which made it difficult for physicians to access information. As a result the potential existed for treatments to be delayed or tests repeated."

Similar inefficiencies existed within the organization too, as billing was delayed while staff awaited paper-based medical records.

Put all the symptoms together and the diagnosis seemed clear: too much reliance on paper. And the remedy? A document imaging system, running on an IBM @server™ iSeries™, and supplied by IBM Premier Business Partner BlueWare Inc. BlueWare's Wellness Connection system uses COLD (Computer Output to Laser Disk), document and clinical multimedia imaging to capture patient information and make it readily available to authorized users.

Like a miracle cure, the system is transforming MidMichigan's business processes, improving patient care and alleviating physician frustration.

"This thing is like a gold nugget out there, largely undiscovered," says Mr. Goodrich, referring to the IBM and BlueWare combined solution. "I'm simply amazed at how much we can do for the modest amount of money we spent."

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Strategic FlashWare Solutions



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## Document and image management improves patient care, hospital efficiency

MidMichigan Medical Center-Midland, a 249-bed facility that's part of a network of health care providers serving six rural counties in East-Central Michigan, has a long history of collaborating with area hospitals and clinics. And yet, despite Midland's extensive high-speed Local Area Network (LAN) and Wide Area Network (WAN) technologies, getting access to information was as tricky as accomplishing a triple bypass. A physician would have to navigate a myriad of applications residing on legacy systems, each with its own password system and user interface.

Not only that, but there was no practical way of providing access to information while assuring compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations. These require security procedures to assure privacy of health information.

As physician access to information grew more urgent, Mr. Goodrich realized there was a product out there that could meet this need and take care of internal efficiency too.

## Prescription for success

That product was the BlueWare Wellness Connection Electronic Medical Record. The solution runs on the IBM @server iSeries platform and includes an IBM Optical Jukebox and IBM software such as Content Manager OnDemand, Advanced Function Printing™, Facsimile Support for iSeries and Advanced Print Utilities.

The system captures patient reports and information from existing computer systems and non-computer generated reports via scanning techniques. Once the disparate patient information is collected, it's securely stored under a simple folder tab system. Information can be accessed by end users with proper security. There is an extensive audit trail as required by medical record law and HIPAA.

IBM Business Partner:	BlueWare Inc.
Solutions:	iSeries, IBM Storage, Content Management, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
Territory:	United States
Customer Target:	Health Care Industry

## The iSeries cure

The fact that Wellness Connection runs on the IBM @server iSeries was compelling for MidMichigan, to say the least. “We've been a IBM customer since day one,” says Mr. Goodrich. “We found the IBM AS/400® to be an absolute workhorse. We run multiple applications on it and never have to reboot.” Which is why he felt more than comfortable moving to the iSeries.

“It has none of the failings I see in client/server computing; with other platforms, I'd have to put 11 new boxes into my data center to run one application. The iSeries is fast, handles data migration easily, plus it's got built-in security, which is essential in a health care setting,” he adds.

Not only that, but the IBM solution from BlueWare came with a very attractive price tag – substantially less than other options MidMichigan was investigating. And because at least 80 percent of the application was out of the box, the implementation was significantly faster.

“Even with some customization, it was less than four months,” says Mr. Goodrich. “I've worked on projects where the pre-planning alone can take four months.” And because it's a browser based system, it's simple to use. No investment in training was required.

## Painless paper cuts

The solution has simplified the physician's job measurably. Before, if physicians wanted to know the progress of their patients,

they would have to trek to the hospital, pull a paper chart from their mailbox and know that even then, it was only as accurate as the update and print run done the previous night. Now, they can log on from their office or home or anywhere there's an Internet connection, go through a secure authentication process and view all their patients' lab reports, transcribed notes, admission and discharge data.

Sure it's convenient, but the system is also vital to patient care. “Our physicians are working with essentially live data now, and can make faster, better diagnoses and treatment plans,” notes Mr. Goodrich.

The system is also addressing MidMichigan's other pain: inefficient business processes. Before, the billing department would wait two weeks before documents were manually prepared and patients could be billed. Now everything can be scanned and bills are out the door that much sooner. With the reduction in accounts receivable and dramatic improvement in turnaround time, MidMichigan expects a return on its investment in six months or less.

The system has proven so efficient that now other departments are chomping at the bit, according to Mr. Goodrich. In the future, he expects to expand on the business management side, adding Human Resources, Accounting and Materials Management to the system.

“The beauty of IBM OnDemand middleware is that once you're done with Medical Records, you can easily capture the benefits across various departments,” says Rose Odette, President, BlueWare. “An enterprise-wide paperless system is a huge undertaking, but it can be tackled in affordable and comfortable stages.”

Considering all of its benefits, the BlueWare solution hardly needs a second opinion. For MidMichigan, it took away the pain – and left a huge gain.

For additional information on how **BlueWare Inc.** can help your organization, contact us at **231-779-0224**, or visit our Web site at **www.blueware.net**