

SUCCESS STORY: Welch Allyn CardioPerfect™ Workstation



COLLABORATORS:

MidWest Health Centre and CH2,
a Welch Allyn distributor

LOCATION:

MidWest Health Centre
Eyre District, South Australia, Australia

PRACTICE MANAGER:

Orietta Gentile

PROFILE:

MidWest Health provides primary
healthcare services to patients in the
Eyre district of South Australia.

MidWest Health Centre, in the Eyre district of South Australia, partnered with Welch Allyn distributor CH2 to link Welch Allyn cardiopulmonary devices with their practice's patient management program, Medical Director. Now ECG test results go directly into each patient's electronic health record, freeing nursing staff from manual scanning and filing and giving them more time to provide better care to their patients.



Julia Johnstone (left) from MidWest Health in South Australia and Malcolm Wainwright (right) of CH2, a Welch Allyn distributor, discuss Julia's experiences connecting Welch Allyn PC-based ECG and spirometry devices to the facility's Electronic Health Record system.

The State of South Australia has the Southern Ocean to the south and is flanked on the other sides by land. Covering a total area of nearly 1 million square kilometers and with an estimated population is just over 1.5 million, speed, efficiency, and data management are critical to provide quality patient care in this very large, dry and rural region of Australia.

MidWest Health Centre serves patients in the Eyre district of South Australia. The staff of MidWest Health have been using Welch Allyn PC-Based ECG and spirometry devices for many years to diagnose patient conditions. The digital output from these devices has been smoothly integrated with Medical Director, a primary-care patient management program from Health Communication Network (HCN). Welch Allyn and HCN have worked closely for many years to seamlessly interface Welch Allyn PC-based cardiopulmonary devices with Medical Director and perfect the user experience.

MidWest Health practice manager Orietta Gentile spoke with us about her experience connecting the devices.



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“One of the largest and cost savings from going digital is the removal of paper and the associated costs of paper supplies.”

Why did you choose Welch Allyn devices for your practice?

We have used Welch Allyn otoscopes, ophthalmoscopes and other diagnostic devices in our practice for many years and have been greatly pleased with their performance and quality. When we were looking at updating our electrocardiograph devices, it was recommended to us to have a look at the Welch Allyn PC-based ECG device. We spent a few months reviewing different types of ECG products on the market, and we came to the conclusion that one of the key aspects is the need for the ECG to be electronically stored for later retrieval and ease of documentation. When we found that Welch Allyn devices had the ability to seamlessly interact with our practice's patient management program, Medical Director, the complete solution fit what we were looking for.

How did the use of CardioPerfect™ WorkStation software and its interaction with Medical Director affect workflow?

It made our workflow more streamlined and efficient. Since nurses do not need to file pieces of paper away, scan ECG tests into the computer or cut and paste them onto an A4 page, their time is now better served with patients and providing them with a higher level of service. The ability to have the programs on the network has greatly aided in streamlining our workflow. Patients have an ECG test done in the treatment room, then they're able to see a doctor or specialist immediately in another consulting room, without the need for manual exchange of the ECG test page—this is great!

Would you say it has reduced task time in the practice?

Yes, very much so. As mentioned before, the small tasks of transferring ECG tests by hand are now removed, as it is done electronically, enabling nursing staff to care for our patients. The biggest concern when we were planning on implementing this solution was, “Was it going to really save time?”, since we have heard of technological installations where it been more grief than good. We have been pleased with the user-friendly design of the two programs and their simplified approach. Some of our nurses are not highly computer literate, and this has helped with our change management to have everyone on our side.

Has the CardioPerfect Workstation–Medical Director interface reduced transcription and other errors?

Yes, it has somewhat. In the past the main concern for errors was the manual process of scanning tests and attaching them to the incorrect patient. Having the seamless ECG transfer ability with minimal user intervention has greatly assisted with matching the right test to the right patient.

How convenient is it to use a single window, through Medical Director, to access and record patient tests?

The single window makes using the system and training nurses straightforward for them to operate the system. Nurses only need to understand how to record and review a patient ECG or spirometer test through the Medical Director program, since all in-between steps are automated. I would estimate that we are saving at least 5 to 6 minutes per nurse per visit having this ability to seamlessly store and retrieve tests.

“We have been very pleased with the quality of the products and have Welch Allyn products all over the practice.”

“Our main driving force to choose a PC-based ECG was its ability of it to easily store patient tests and the ability to review the tests at a later date.”

Was the Welch Allyn devices' ability to connect with Medical Director a defining factor in your purchase?

Yes, it was one of the top reasons why we went with Welch Allyn. It made the decision easier—put it that way! We spent approximately 18 months defining what our requirements were to be and ensuring that we had the required resources and infrastructure to support this solution.

What cost savings have there been using a PC-based ECG device?

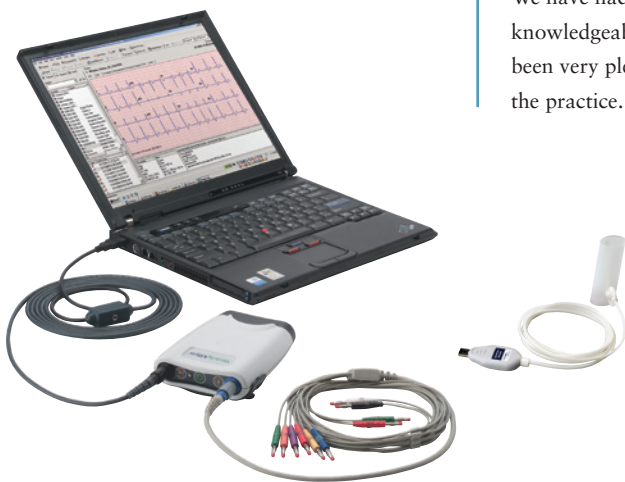
One of the largest cost savings from going digital is the removal of paper and the associated costs of paper supplies. As you know, the special paper used in ECG machines is not cheap, and it adds up over the period of a year! I guess since time is related to money, we have saved by being more efficient and being able to see more patients in the average day. The previous spirometer we used needed to be sent away to be calibrated once a year. We can calibrate the Welch Allyn spirometer ourselves, which saves us servicing costs.

Why did you choose a PC-based ECG over a traditional ECG device?

Our main driving force to choose a PC-based ECG was its ability to easily store patient tests, and ability to review the tests at a later date. If we choose to print an ECG, we can do so by using our existing printer. It give us more flexibility in the way we work. The ECG is very portable and we can easily take it into any room with a PC and use it there if we need to—we don't have to carry or wheel around a bulky ECG machine.

What has been your overall experience with Welch Allyn?

We have had a very positive experience with Welch Allyn over the years. We have a really knowledgeable local representative and reliable support if we have any issues. We have been very pleased with the quality of the products and have Welch Allyn products all over the practice.



To find out more about how the Welch Allyn CardioPerfect™ Workstation software can interface easily with your system and help bring solutions to your facility or practice, visit www.welchallyn.com.

Welch Allyn Corporate Headquarters
4341 State Street Road, PO Box 220
Skaneateles Falls, New York 13153-0220 USA
(t) 800.535.6663
(f) 315.685.4091
www.welchallyn.com

Australia: +61 29 638 3000
China: +86 21 6327 9631
Malaysia: +603 78753341
Singapore: +65 6419 8100

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