

Becoming partners in paediatric radiology

Shehnaz Pancholi, CEO of PRA, discusses the increasing demand for paediatric subspecialty interpretations and how the company helps meet those needs.

COMPANY PROFILE

Paediatric Radiology of America (PRA) provides quality radiological interpretations, working only with highly qualified physicians trained specifically in the subspecialty of paediatric radiology. PRA provides 24/7 365 days a year coverage and bridges the gap via teleradiology. Visit: www.pdrads.com.



PRA CEO Shehnaz Pancholi.

Teleradiology is the process of sending radiologic images through digital transmission via standard telephone lines, wide area network or over a local area network. The method is frequently used in hospitals and clinics where specialist radiologists are in short supply.

Paediatric Radiology of America (PRA) currently provides over 300 real image reads a day for numerous US hospitals. PRA CEO Shehnaz Pancholi anticipates that by the end of 2009 this number will surpass 500 and PRA will double the number of hospitals they service.

Supplying support Pancholi is quick to mention that the company provides a complementary service for hospitals and is not in competition with radiologists. 'PRA is like an extension of your own faculty. Our radiologists are American Board of Radiology certified and vetted through a strict recruitment and quality control process,' she says.

'Many of our faculty are subspecialty experts in areas such as neuro-paediatrics and

cardiac paediatric radiology,' Pancholi adds. 'Rather than have an adult radiologist read images for children, you can have access to a paediatric radiologist 24 hours a day. The result is a reduced incidence of misreads. Although paediatric teleradiology entered the industry later than general adult teleradiology, we have seen an increasing number of children's hospitals, general hospitals with paediatric and neonatal departments, as well as outpatient clinics that are utilising our service.'

And with PRA soon to be Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organisations certified, clients can be assured that they are receiving the best quality teleradiology service available.

'By enlisting a paediatric teleradiology service, such as PRA, the client facilities not only gain some of the most well trained paediatric radiologists in the US, but the referring physicians can also enjoy complete confidence that the readings they receive on their paediatric patients will be accurate,' says Pancholi.

Rather than relying on one specialist radiologist to physically cover several different locations, PRA equips its staff to provide quality care service from its home office. This allows PRA to service many different hospitals both nationally and internationally. The PRA system matches each requisition received to the most qualified radiologist, thereby ensuring highly accurate readings.

Moreover, PRA has the ability to staff experts on site at children's hospitals located around the US. The on-site coverage option will accommodate short- and long-term placement requirements based on individual needs.

Quality checks Time management and quality checks are also built in to the PRA service. 'We have a solid infrastructure in place. Our operational workload is handled through our support centre. We currently provide 100% national reporting for paediatrics, which is unique in the industry,' Pancholi says.

'The support centre acts as a liaison between doctors and

hospitals as well as handling administrative tasks such as image management,' she explains. 'We have developed our proprietary RIS system (Intelli-RIS), which enhances the hospital staff's ability to process data.

'To complement our Intelli-RIS system, we have also implemented HL7, which allows direct reporting with the hospital PAC systems.'

HL7 provides a framework and related standards for the exchange, integration, sharing and retrieval of electronic health information.

PRA also offers a secure online system, which can be used by hospital radiologists from any location in the event of an emergency. The web PACS servers will only display relevant patient information for each radiologist and the web-based software is available from the PRA servers free of charge.

'Our radiologists are always available to speak with the nurses, physicians or technicians on-site,' Pancholi says. 'So, if there is a positive finding or critical finding, they are readily available.' ☒