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Area Manager, Dr. Jones & Partners clinic, Calvary Wakefield Hospital, Adelaide, Australia

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Room(s) to grow

DR advantages support multi-site practice to expand its reach, while making the most of limited space

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Interview with BRADLEY DREVER, Area Manager and LEIGH PENNEY, Area Manager

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Area Manager, Dr. Jones & Partners clinic, Calvary Wakefield Hospital, Adelaide, Australia



“We’re a private imaging practice, so we need to focus on productivity, servicing our referrers and, of course, providing the best quality imaging service for the patient.” That’s how Leigh Penney, Area Manager, explains the reasons private imaging practice Dr. Jones & Partners chose to implement a range of Agfa HealthCare direct radiography (DR) solutions at its site in the Calvary Wakefield Hospital in Adelaide, Australia.

The Dr. Jones & Partners clinic at Calvary Wakefield Hospital is located within the hospital building, but separate from the hospital’s other departments, describes Bradley Drever, Area Manager. “That means that the space we have is limited, yet the demand for imaging has been increasing. Our Agfa HealthCare DR solutions allow us to handle more patients, without increasing space or staff.”

“DR helps us achieve our ambitions”

The practice had used CR for around 15 years, and the CR fleet at the hospital was getting ‘tired’, says Bradley Drever and needed to be replaced. What’s more, they had reached their booking capacity with the existing equipment. “We preferred to upgrade as much as possible,” he explains. “We knew we wanted to have a single supplier for all of the DR systems in this site, and we looked into three or four different brands. We chose Agfa HealthCare, for three main reasons. Firstly, we were familiar with the company and its solutions: we love the MUSICA workstation, which is intuitive and easy to learn. Plus, we have been very happy with Agfa HealthCare’s quality and service over our many years working with them. Secondly, Agfa HealthCare’s DR solutions offered us the streamlined workflow we wanted. And finally, with all this, the solutions were priced competitively.”

Dr. Jones & Partners is focusing on establishing itself as the quality imaging practice in the state of South Australia. “As we grow and expand, implementing DR is keeping us abreast of technology, and also of image quality,” says Leigh Penney. “So it’s a key part of helping us achieve our ambitions.”

While Dr. Jones & Partners hasn’t tracked specific waiting times or productivity increases related to installing the DR solutions, the improvements are visible and dramatic: “We do about 110 patients per day in this area. At Calvary Wakefield Hospital, we can now perform the same number of exams in two rooms as we used to do in three: that means we have completely freed up an entire room for another modality!”

DR Retrofit: “With the Retrofit, our sites are more efficient, with the same number of staff”

The practice started moving to DR by implementing a DX-D Retrofit in one of its smaller, stand-alone sites. “We were very pleased with the result: this is a practice that handles 40-60 patients each day, using two CR rooms,” comments Bradley Drever “With the Retrofit, we can now see all of those patients in a single room, freeing up both space and equipment for other purposes! And the Retrofit doesn’t require a large capital outlay.”

With this successful introduction, the practice upgraded two CR rooms at the Calvary Wakefield Hospital with Retrofits. “Our situation there is a little different, as the space we have inside the hospital is limited,” explains Bradley Drever. He continues, “The sites where we have installed Retrofit are about 50% more efficient using existing staffing.”

DX-D 100 Mobile: “It has dramatically sped up our service!”

At the same time, the practice added mobile DR to its imaging services for the hospital, with the DX-D 100 Mobile. “We love it, it makes such a difference and has dramatically sped up our service!” says Leigh Penney. “Our department is somewhat isolated within the hospital. With our mobile CR, we could take images anywhere in the hospital, but we had to bring the cassettes back to our department for processing. If we needed additional images, again, we had to return to the department for more cassettes, and then return to the patient. This back and forth added a lot to the total amount of time needed to provide the images. Now, with cassette-less DR, that is completely eliminated: everything happens right at the spot. The patients are very happy with the speed, and the doctors are very pleased with the excellent DR image quality. Our radiographers are happier, too, because it is much less physically demanding to do mobile imaging without constantly returning to the department.”

Agfa HealthCare solutions

■ DX-D Retrofit

A quick, simple and non-invasive way to go direct digital, making the most of existing investments in radiography equipment and systems by affordably upgrading them to DR. Easy installation assures that it is up and running in next to no time, very cost-effectively. With the intuitive interface, users are quickly up to speed.

DX-D 600

The ceiling-suspended DX-D 600, available in fully automated, partially automated and manual configurations, offers optimal study versatility and high throughput, and is designed to deliver a truly integrated, innovative X-ray room. This high performance X-ray room delivers maximum productivity, fully motorized auto-positioning, fully motorized vertical and horizontal tube tracking and a motorized wall stand, and it is pre-programmable.

DX-D 100 Mobile

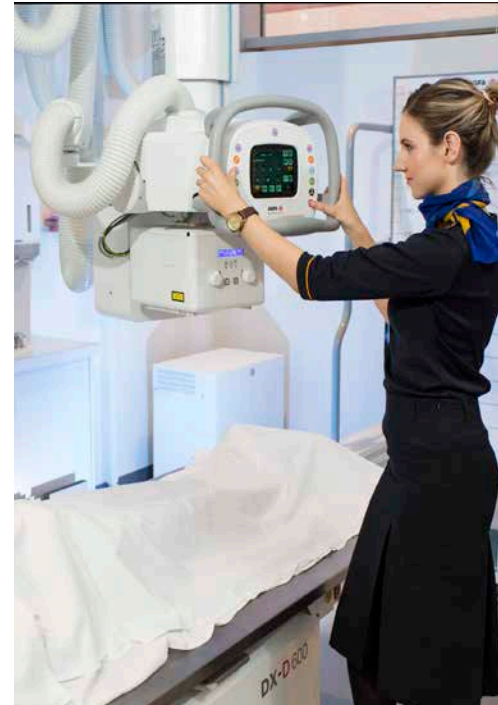
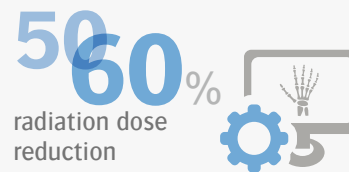
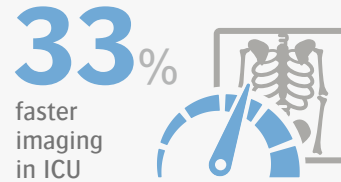
The DX-D 100 Mobile can handle a broad range of general radiography X-ray studies, and is ideal for the least mobile patients. It delivers mobile imaging excellence, with instant high-quality image capture and immediate image validation, transfer and access, even by the bedside. With its very short exposure time, images are available and can be validated straight away after exposure.

MUSICA

The MUSICA workstation and image processing software enhance streamlined workflow procedures and maximize image quality, helping hospitals to follow the ALARA principle of using the the lowest dose reasonably achievable. The workstation optimizes workflow, with very fast image acquisition and an intuitive user interface that is the same for CR and DR, while the image processing software automatically analyzes the characteristics of each raw image and optimizes the processing parameters, independent of body part or dose deviation.

Agfa HealthCare contribution

Australia's healthcare system includes both public and private hospitals and services. Within the rather competitive private sector for imaging, productivity and attracting and retaining referring physicians are key to success. Agfa HealthCare is committed to providing a portfolio of solutions that ensures that every facility can 'go DR'. For Dr. Jones & Partners, this meant the ability to easily upgrade its existing CR systems to DR, without extensive capital outlay, but also to replace end-of-life, ceiling-mounted CR systems with new, top-of-the-line DR X-ray rooms. The quality, speed and ease-of-use of the DX-D 100 Mobile further support the practice within the Calvary Wakefield Hospital, by significantly speeding up imaging, anywhere in the hospital.



About Dr. Jones & Partners

- Dr. Jones & Partners Medical Imaging is a private practice providing diagnostic and interventional radiology services throughout South Australia and Alice Springs. Its 40 radiologists and nuclear medicine physicians and 400 staff operate across 24 clinics, 50% of which are in hospitals, including major private facilities such as St Andrew's, Calvary Wakefield and Burnside, public hospitals and regional clinics from Victor Harbor to the Iron Triangle and Alice Springs.
- A long-time Agfa HealthCare customer, in December 2014, Dr. Jones & Partners implemented two DX-D Retrofits and a DX-D 100 mobile solution in its premier clinic in the Calvary Wakefield Hospital, in Adelaide. In June 2015, it added two DX-D 600 top-of-the-line, ceiling-mounted X-ray rooms.

Room(s) to grow

Leigh Penney gives an example: “Every morning, we do ICU rounds first thing: this is usually 10-20 images. ICU wants their images before 8 AM. Before, if we started at 7 AM, we would finish by 8:30. Now, with the DX-D 100 Mobile, we are done within the ICU’s 8 AM deadline. So we have cut 30 minutes off our ICU imaging time, every day.” Daily ICU imaging is thus about 33% faster.

DX-D 600: “Very smooth and productive”

Dr. Jones & Partners also needed to replace two CR ceiling-mounted X-ray rooms that had reached their end-of-life; for this they chose the top-of-the-line DX-D 600 DR rooms. “As we want to be the quality imaging practice for South Australia, we certainly need state-of-the-art X-ray rooms for the Calvary Wakefield site. The ceiling-mounted configuration allows all dynamic techniques, such as hips, bed-patients, general emergency work. You can move the X-ray tube all around the room with the press of a button,” comments Bradley Drever.

Leigh Penney explains that they selected one fully automated and one semi-automated room: “We do quite a lot of orthopedic work, and the fully automated room is ideal for full-leg and full-spine imaging.”

The new X-ray rooms were very easy to learn to use, agree Bradley Drever and Leigh Penney, and increased the collaboration between radiographers: “Before, each radiographer would work individually with one patient in one room, leaving the room to process the CR cassettes. But with the top-of-the-line DR room and the Retrofits, they no longer have to leave the room. What we see now is that they are working together more: while one positions the patient, the other prepares the worklist and post-processes the images. Once the last image is taken, they are ready for the next patient. It’s very smooth and productive.”

Dose: “We can get as much as a 50-60% dose reduction”

While each of the DR solutions they have implemented – the Retrofit, the DX-D 100 Mobile and the DX-D 600 – offers its own advantages, the practice has seen overall benefits from the DR itself, as well. “Part of being a ‘quality’ practice is controlling and reducing radiation dose, which is a priority for everyone in patient care. The Agfa HealthCare DR allows us to increase kVp settings to reduce dose, while still seeing improved image quality compared to CR. We can get as much as a 50-60% dose reduction, and we continue to do tests to see how low we can go.”

Optimization of kVp and mAs

	Pre-DR	With DR
For a chest X-ray	95 kVp and 8 mAs	110-120 kVp and 1-3 mAs
For an ankle X-ray	54 kVp and 4 mAs	63 kVp and 2 mAs

MUSICA: “You can identify things you just couldn’t see before”

MUSICA image processing software has had its role to play in the image quality, as well. “With the latest version of MUSICA, the image processing is so sharp, we even asked to soften it a bit, because it is so much sharper than people are used to! And we get amazing details, effortlessly. You can identify things you just couldn’t see before.”

The radiographers also get a clearer display without using filters. “For larger patients, for example, we get a much better dynamic range,” comments Bradley Drever. These benefits extend throughout the hospital, thanks to the mobile DX-D 100, he says: “For example, when taking chest X-rays on the ward, there is a good view of the lines in the chest, we can see the mediastinum so much better. And the image quality is just massively better. In fact, it’s been so good we’re using grids a lot less with thicker extremities, such as knees or shoulders, which again allows us to use less dose.”

“Agfa HealthCare DR solutions support our success”

“Investing in the right equipment is a key part of our growth strategy as a quality imaging practice,” concludes Bradley Drever. “With Agfa HealthCare’s DR solutions, we achieve our goals for dose reduction, availability, throughput and patient care, while providing a level of quality that referrers and patients appreciate. In a competitive environment, this is a big support for our success.”

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