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Documentation capture, Healthcare AI

Why Frimley Health NHS Trust are speech-enabling their Epic EPR

Dr. Simon Wallace | Chief Clinical Information Officer (CCIO), Nuance Healthcare UK and Ireland

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After last year's virtual event, the UK digital health community is gathering under the same roof for Digital Health Rewired 2022. I'm looking forward to discussing the latest innovations, sharing best practices, and rediscovering our industry's human pulse. But most of all, I'm looking forward to joining Dr Graham Smith, CCIO at Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust, as he explains why (and how) the Trust is speech-enabling its Epic Electronic Patient Record (EPR) system. Here's a primer on Frimley's story so far.

Like so many other NHS Trusts, Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust is on a journey of digital transformation, with the ultimate goal of delivering exceptional patient care. And it's no small undertaking. Frimley started its journey with more than 200 legacy systems. Today, it's well on its way to replacing them with a single system, based on the Epic EPR.

Speech recognition technology is playing a crucial supporting role in the Trust's digital transformation. As Dr Smith so succinctly puts it, 'clinicians are not touch typists', and by speech-enabling its new EPR, the Trust is making sure that the price of digital transformation isn't a drop in staff productivity.

In the past, the Trust has relied on transcription services and handwritten reports for document and letter creation. This process worked, but it was slow and inefficient. Paper records had to be scanned, then entered into electronic systems. Letters had to be typed up and sent out to patients and GPs. With the move to an Epic EPR, the Trust wanted to keep its staff using their voices—but it also wanted to ensure they could create documents and letters in a much more efficient, real-time way.

Why Frimley chose a 'speech-first' rollout strategy

Frimley chose our cloud-based speech recognition solution, Nuance Dragon Medical One, which accurately translates the voices of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals into detailed clinical narratives that feed directly into a Trust's EPR. Dragon Medical One has a strong track record of highly successful implementations with Epic EPR systems, both in the UK and internationally—and this was a key factor for Dr Smith and his colleagues.

The Trust made the strategic decision to roll out Dragon Medical One ahead of Epic. Interviewed about Frimley's approach, Dr Smith explained the Trust's thinking: "What this will do is give our clinicians the ability to use speech recognition with current letter writing processes and document creation processes

[...] and be confident that voice recognition will work when we switch to Epic."

The Trust's phased rollout of speech recognition and the Epic EPR would also reduce the amount of change staff would experience (and training they would need) at any one time. Even better, it meant The Trust could start seeing ROI from speech recognition months before its Epic EPR went live."We've learned, through rolling it out ahead of our EPR program, that you can use it very successfully with some of the more traditional methods of letter creation, using some of our quite old and long-in-the-tooth legacy applications," says Dr Smith. "And you can still gain decent benefits without having an all-singing, all-dancing, integrated system."

Transformation towards more flexible healthcare

Dragon Medical One is a cloud-based, UK GDPR compliant solution, and provides a consistent clinical documentation experience across platforms and devices. And to help its staff work even more flexibly, Frimley is teaming up Dragon Medical One with our PowerMic Mobile app allowing clinicians to use their own smartphone as a dictation microphone and to navigate the EPR—and even perform common actions, such as creating a note simply by using their voice. As such, it both supports clinician mobility, and reduces the need for keyboard sharing and its associated infection risks.

For the Trust, this is just a first step in building greater mobility into its workflows. "We are going to be using the PowerMic mobile app, which will give us more flexibility with using speech recognition," says Dr Smith. "But you know, there are also opportunities to be using the speech recognition natively within the Epic [mobile] apps."

Find out more—and experience Dragon Medical One—at Rewired 2022

I'm excited to hear Dr Smith share the latest insights, lessons and results from Frimley's speech-enabled Epic EPR implementation. If you've a ticket for Rewired 2022, his session is 12:50-13:00 GMT, on Tuesday 15 March, on the Digital Transformation stage. I'll be there with him, ready to answer any questions you have about Dragon Medical One.

Want to try award-winning clinical speech recognition for yourself? Come and find Nuance at booth D32 in the Rewired 2022 exhibition hall. You'll be able demo Dragon Medical One and discuss your own digital transformation journey with our speech recognition experts.

Tags: Digitisation of the NHS, Customer success story

More Information

Meet Dragon Medical One

Find out more about Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust's chosen speech recognition solution, and how it helps clinicians capture patient stories more naturally and efficiently—anywhere, anytime.

Learn more

About Dr. Simon Wallace

Dr. Simon Wallace is the Chief Clinical Information Officer (CCIO) of Nuance's Healthcare division in the UK and Ireland. Simon has worked as a GP, hospital and public health doctor in Brighton and London. His interest in health informatics began in the 90s when he spent a year at the King's Fund investigating the impact of the internet on shared decision making between patients and their healthcare professional. For the past 15 years, he has worked for a range of organisations including Bupa, Dr Foster, Cerner Corporation and GSK across a range of technologies which include electronic patient records, telemedicine, mobile health and lifestyle devices. Simon has a keen interest in the voluntary sector, recently completing a 7 year term as a Trustee for Fitzrovia Youth in Action, a children and young people's charity based in London.

View all posts by Dr. Simon Wallace