



Merge Case Study

University of Vermont Medical Center

MERGE
An IBM Company

Successful Partnership Yields Results in Cardiac Cath Lab Care

Merge Hemo™ and Merge Cardio™

The University of Vermont Medical Center | Burlington, VT

CUSTOMER PROFILE

- The University of Vermont Medical Center is an academic medical center located in Burlington, VT. It is affiliated with the University of Vermont College of Medicine and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and serves as a regional referral center and a community hospital.
- They currently have three cath labs, two EP labs and one hybrid OR that serves Vascular, Cardiac and general surgical needs and interventional procedures including TAVR, lead extraction and Lariat procedures.

CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

- In 1997, The University of Vermont Medical Center attended the American College of Cardiology annual conference to evaluate a hemodynamic monitoring system. In 1998, they installed two Merge Hemo systems in the cath lab with four nursing stations.

SUCCESS WITH MERGE

- Merge Hemo and its unique functionality helped The University of Vermont Medical Center grow from a standalone cath lab to a fully implemented hemodynamics system with a uniform archive manager and a complete reporting platform, inventory management, improved data accuracy and enhanced care.

Structured, Standardized and Searchable

When The University of Vermont Medical Center started their search for a real-time documentation and monitoring tool for the cardiac cath lab, they knew they wanted one that was structured, standardized and searchable. And according to Theresa Fortner, Nurse Manager, Invasive Cardiology at The University of Vermont Medical Center, even back in 1998, they recognized that Merge Hemo was a visionary solution.

“From the initial install, Merge Hemo has provided a repository for study information dating back to 1998. Statistical information from our first patients is still minable through the User Defined Reporting application because Merge has chosen to maintain an internal method to insure that no patient data is left behind...even with major changes to the application,” explains Fortner.

As expected, their initial build was focused on developing standardized templates to document case flow and inventory management. These templates from then to now capture everything from vital signs, hemodynamic measurements, medication administration, device placement and deployments and patient response during diagnostic and interventional procedures. “Merge Hemo is incredibly easy to use. Data is captured quickly with the use of a mouse or touch screen.”

The University of Vermont Medical Center also finds great value in the ability to change templates to reflect practice or documentation requirements. They can also make changes to inventory by adding or deactivating various product lines as needed, which ensures current pricing and appropriate charge codes to support facility billing.

Another great feature of Merge Hemo is that it provides clinicians with prior patient history and data, which is ideal for patients returning for further testing and interventions. “This makes our overall flow more efficient; to have items such as risk factors pre populate so we are only updating those relevant changes makes us more time-effective in the cath lab.”

“We partnered with Merge to develop a strategic plan

for the implementation and evolution of Merge Hemo.

Over the years they have enhanced the product based on our input and have designed clinically relevant features that align with an ever-changing healthcare market.”

Theresa Fortner, Nurse Manager
Invasive Cardiology,
The University of Vermont Medical Center

Collaboration Counts

Merge Hemo has been a valuable service line solution for cardiac procedures in invasive and non-invasive cardiology for The University of Vermont Medical Center. In fact, Fortner explains the partnership has led to collaboration on items including:

- Chronological log templates for procedural flow, which ensure all staff document in the same, consistent way
- Easy interfacing with their EMR
- Assistance with documentation requirements for JC, CMS and other billing agencies, and the ability to modify templates and implement new standards as needed
- Inventory interface and management, which is an electronic interface between Merge Hemo and their supply chain ordering system, to ensure an accurate reordering process and better management of departmental budgets/costs
- The University of Vermont Medical Center also utilizes Merge Cardio, an image and information management system, which supports all cardiology modalities. They appreciate the ability to review all cardiovascular images in a central location, which ensures efficiency when deciding treatment plans for cardiac patients
- Merge Cardio’s reporting platform allows for reports from Merge Hemo to be generated, reviewed and confirmed anywhere, any time. “A bonus is the web-based application that allows both images and reports to be viewed remotely—a huge win for the clinicians.”

Long-Term Success with Merge

Fortner feels the partnership has lasted because of their shared vision with Merge: patient care is the #1 priority. “We have worked closely with Merge to determine the best times to implement new features. And I am happy to say that they have demonstrated a continuous hands-on approach for guidance, assistance, and troubleshooting. This goes a long way in my book.”

Something else that Fortner appreciates about Merge Hemo is that it’s not only a diagnostic tool; it also plays a big part with their budget planning, management reports, volume data, quality improvement projects and customized physician and procedural reports.

“Merge Hemo has certainly met -and even exceeded- our needs with regard to the day to day operations in the cath lab. Because the data collection is consistent for all staff, it gives us great confidence in the data we extract from the system. It helps us make business decisions and assures us that we have the appropriate staff and inventory available to better service our patients and physicians.” She also believes it allows for efficient quality data reporting since data collected within Merge Hemo mirrors the NCDR data requirements. From there, through flat files, The University of Vermont Medical Center is able to auto send data directly to the cath PCI tool so their QA nurse functions more as a data auditor verses a data entry person.

“Merge has been our partner in building a sustainable system that has stood the test of time, and has evolved as healthcare needs have changed clinically and from a compliance and billing standpoint.”

About Merge

Merge is a leading provider of innovative enterprise imaging, interoperability and clinical systems that seek to advance healthcare. Merge's enterprise and cloud-based technologies for image intensive specialties provide access to any image, anywhere, any time. Merge also provides clinical trials software with end-to-end study support in a single platform and other intelligent health data and analytics solutions. With solutions that have been used by providers for more than 25 years, Merge is helping to reduce costs, improve efficiencies and enhance the quality of healthcare worldwide. For more information, visit merge.com and follow us @MergeHealthcare.

Merge Cardio is not FDA-cleared for diagnostic use on mobile devices

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