



Concierge Overview

The purpose of this brief is to provide an update re:

- (a) how the *Concierge* project works in Comox and its benefits;
- (b) *Concierge's* potential as a more global tool ;
- (c) Broader implementation issues.

Concierge: St. Joseph's – An Overview

St. Joseph's provides a broad range of diagnostic services for 6,000 inpatients and 70,000 outpatients per year. These services are referred to St. Joseph's by a medical staff of 91 physicians. In fiscal 02/03, St. Joseph's provided the following diagnostic tests:

	<u>Inpatient</u>	<u>Outpatient</u>	<u>Total</u>
Lab	142,949	625,378	768,327
Imaging	<u>4,905</u>	<u>49,646</u>	<u>54,551</u>
Total:	147,854	675,024	822,878
%	18%	82%	100%

Eighty-two percent of diagnostic tests were for an outpatient setting. The medical staff operate from 30 offices in the Comox Valley. Three of these offices, comprising 15 physicians, use an electronic health record. The remaining 76 physicians and 27 offices have paper-based health records.

St. Joseph's distributes over 500,000 diagnostic reports per year of which approximately 400,000 are to external physician offices.

Using *Concierge*, St. Joseph's is able to automatically transmit 500,000 diagnostic reports per year electronically to any of the following:

- file insertion to "Clinicare"
- file transfer to computer
- paper printer

The transmittal is via a secure socket layer encrypted connection to the physician's desktop and requires no client software – only an Internet browser and an Internet connection. All transmittals are fully auditable through transaction logs by physician and/or patient, and the system is fully compliant with privacy requirements.

In addition to electronic report distribution, *Concierge* is able to provide:

- non-repudiation of report delivery
- on-line access to diagnostic histories for re-referral
- results trending
- reduction of duplicate testing
- order entry (not yet deployed in Comox – operational in U.S. labs)

Concierge, including Help Desk, costs approximately 8 – 10 cents per transmittal per year to operate. These costs compare favorably with other available distribution systems such as Medinet at 35 cents and Canada Post at 48 cents per transmittal. The *Concierge* transmittal costs are fully offset by clerical staff savings in assembly and sorting.

Concierge requires no capital start-up costs. The database and formatting of reports can be implemented using standard HL7 exports from the hospital's lab and radiology systems. There are no up-front licensing costs.

Concierge is a hosted ASP product on AT&T servers which are among the most robust and secure servers in the world. Training can be done in a physician's office in less than 30 minutes.

Concierge: Global Potential

Concierge is a global solution which has been implemented initially in a local setting in Comox. It is helpful to note the following aspects that distinguish a global solution from a purely local solution.

1. Global Access – Access via the Internet makes *Concierge* available from anywhere in the world. St. Joseph's currently is being accessed by physicians in Victoria, Vancouver and Fort Nelson as well as in Comox.
2. Scalability – *Concierge* is implemented in large laboratory corporations servicing up to 1,200 physicians per account.
3. Inter-operability – *Concierge* has written lab system and ADT HL7 interfaces to most major vendors (including Cerner and Meditech).
4. Data Standards – The *Concierge* database conforms to the LOINC BC lab test standard.
5. Privacy Standards – *Concierge* meets the draft BC Privacy Codes of Practice standards consistent with the CSA privacy standards.

6. Affordability – There are low financial barriers to implementation of *Concierge* and no cost burden to physicians apart from a low speed Internet connection.
7. Physician Compatibility – Physicians are able to utilize *Concierge* regardless of their local practice systems – from manual paper-based records to a full blown EHR.

Concierge: Global Implementation Questions

Concierge has resolved the technical and software barriers to creating a global diagnostic repository system capable of handling data on a provincial scale. The remaining implementation questions, however, are:

1. Who will be the data custodian of a provincial repository?
2. Who will authenticate access for users?
3. How will the lab test standard be implemented given that this is a long-term process of standardization?
4. How will anomalies in the PHN Client Registry be resolved?
5. How will physician/SP connectivity be completed?
6. Who will manage and assure that privacy standards are enforced?

Concierge: Why has it worked in Comox?

One of the questions St. Joseph's is asked following a demonstration of *Concierge* is "How has St. Joseph's been able to do this with a minimum of financial, technical and human resources at its disposal?" The keys to success for St. Joseph's in developing this solution have been:

1. Narrow Business Focus – *Concierge*, by focusing on report distribution and retrieval, has shed the burden of large scale data standardization as a prerequisite for a repository. Standardization is and will be an ongoing part of the *Concierge* system as it evolves.
2. Low Capital Outlay – The availability of *Concierge* on an ASP-hosted basis enables the use of *Concierge* as an interim solution towards a global EHR. There is no capital cost "up front"; hence the product can be shed once a global solution is ready.
3. Custody of the Data – St. Joseph's was able to act as custodian of the data.
4. Customer Service – St. Joseph's focused on providing customer service and support to physician offices with training and ISP start-up assistance.