

How Eastern Health streamlined operations to improve patient experience and enable secure remote workers



A decade-long partnership of continuous improvement

About our customer

With more than 13,000 employees across 110 locations, Eastern Health is the largest of four Regional Health Authorities in Newfoundland and Labrador. It serves a population of more than 300,000 and provides high-quality, safe, accessible, and sustainable care with a deep focus on the wellbeing of patients, residents, and clients. Eastern Health faces business challenges common to healthcare organizations such as financial and labor constraints and seeks to further streamline, automate, and digitize its operations.



Challenge

- Reduce print costs
- Change employee behaviors
- Digitize and automate paper-based workflows
- Manage print output and services
- Provide point of service scanning

At the start, Eastern Health was looking for opportunities to decrease print costs and began to evaluate the organization's printing, copying, faxing, and form processing behaviors and patterns. Eastern Health was focused on sustainability and looking for partnerships that could support that goal. Over time, Eastern Health shared its business goals with Ricoh including its desire to digitize and automate operations and improve patient outcomes. From the very beginning, there was a strong partnership between the organizations.

"For about a decade, we've been discouraging unnecessary print use across the organization — defaulting a lot of these machines to duplex printing, for example, resulting in less paper and a lower environmental footprint," said Ron Johnson, Eastern Health's Vice President of Innovation and Rural Health.

"With Ricoh, we have a continuously evolving, innovative relationship where we're constantly challenging each other," said Johnson. "They're vested in our success and the close, working relationship we share has really made the difference — allowing Ricoh to be totally in tune with our business to realize meaningful outcomes."

"Ricoh has traditionally been viewed as a document imaging company. But for Eastern Health, Ricoh has been a partner that is integral to various other aspects of our business operations."

— Ron Johnson, Eastern Health,
Vice President, Innovation and Rural Health

Results

- Automated processing of 150,000+ invoices
- \$232K+ saved per year through staff optimization
- 99% increase in machine productivity
- 900+ fax lines eliminated
- 30%+ reduction in print spending
- 2.8M pages saved = 346 trees

Ricoh began its work with Eastern Health in 2010, managing its print fleet of 1,610 multi-function devices and printers. Ricoh helped Eastern Health realize cost savings of 30% within that first project, about \$1M annually, by eliminating obsolete technology, right-sizing the fleet, and negotiating rates that lower operating costs.

As Eastern Health exceeded its financial goals, Ricoh earned trust and played a larger part in key operational tasks that positively impact clinical and patient experience. By right-sizing staff, the partnership with Ricoh helped Eastern Health save \$232K+ per year, reducing the manual workload by 50% and enabling employees who had been doing that work to focus on more high-value, patient-impacting care.

Using both content management software and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology, Eastern Health was able to turn stagnant, paper-based records data into searchable, actionable data across multiple departments.

How we did it

- Replaced 900+ traditional fax machines with digital fax solution (OpenText RightFax)
- Automated data processing of 150,000+ invoices into EHRs, with potential to save approximately \$200K per year in labor costs
- Used content management software and OCR to convert 5.8M pages of medical records into meta-search indexable image files (LaserFiche)
- Enabled them to cut costs by 30% by right-sizing, optimizing, and managing the entire print fleet
- Reduced IT time by assuming first call help desk support for Ricoh devices

Eastern Health was able to successfully reduce redundancies, eliminate manual processes, and increase efficiencies to control its budget. Ricoh created a digital transformation project manager role in 2019 to assist them in digitizing operations — just in time to confront the complications brought on by the pandemic.

“We started out buying photocopiers but saw the value in partnering on the various services available,”

**— Ron Johnson, Eastern Health,
Vice President, Innovation and Rural Health**



“The efficiencies we’ve achieved to clinical support areas have positively impacted patient care, as well as our staff — by reducing manual processes and allowing them to focus on more patient-impacting work,”

— Ron Johnson, Eastern Health,
Vice President, Innovation and Rural Health

Ricoh worked in partnership with Eastern Health to improve the patient journey and streamline operations by automating the mailroom, simplifying resource allocation, digitizing medical records and faxes, and more.

Modernizing and connecting technologies and unlocking information helps enable secure, remote work that doesn’t compromise patient experience. By establishing interoperable systems and integrating everything with the EHR, Eastern Health reduced administrative tasks and manual, error-prone processes, and empowered remote workers.

Automation of critical, revenue-generating healthcare workflows helped Eastern Health undergo a business transformation journey resulting in more timely, accurate, and compliant data handling and better patient experience. This has had far-reaching effects including enabling faster procedure approvals, improving claims resolution rate, and aiding auditing compliance.

To learn more about improving the patient experience by making data accessible and actionable, visit ricoh-usa.com.

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