

# Case Study

Watts Healthcare  
Los Angeles, California



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## Watts Healthcare finds long-lasting solution in Novarad workflow management

Community Health Center in Los Angeles, California has found decisive success after installing Novarad's PACS/RIS - making significant progress in both quality of patient care and work environment.

For 50 years, Watts Healthcare has served the medical needs of its Los Angeles area community. As a federally funded community health center, Watts Healthcare provides essential care to those south of L.A.'s downtown.

The facility is home to approximately 300 employees and offers a wide range of medical services including ancillary, clinical, preventive, and specialty services. It is one of the first community health centers established in the US, and aids the most underserved population in Los Angeles County.

Through implementation of a Novarad solution, Watts Healthcare has seen numerous positive changes, including those in workflow, budget utilization, along with increased patient and referring physician satisfaction.



## Transitioning Technology to Spare Costs and Increase Productivity

Before switching to Novarad, Watts Healthcare was what most in the field consider an analog facility. This means that as far as medical imaging was concerned, they were using a film processor, and storing hard copies of the film to keep track of the images. When compared with the use of a PACS for digital imaging, film is understandably inefficient. This issue prompted radiology manager James Johnson, BSRS, RT(R) to seek a better option.

“With the acquisition of the Novarad PACS, we became a digital imaging facility,” said Mr. Johnson. “Now we have digital x-ray, digital mammography, and digital ultrasound which has eliminated the need for paper charts, film storage, and processing—all the cumbersome things that used to take up space and slow our processes down.”

The actual value of upgrading to Novarad has been measurable and demonstrable, and the facility expects to see greater savings in the future.

“We are looking at about a ten percent savings at this point [with Novarad],” said Mr. Johnson. “We’ve had the PACS for less than a year, so I don’t think we’ve seen the maximum savings yet. I think it will continue to add up.”

## What’s Good for the Provider is Good for the Patient

Improvements on the provider side typically provide a wealth of benefits to patients, as well. A streamlined workflow means shorter wait times; technological improvement contributes to speedy and efficient service.

In addition to aforementioned time and cost savings, Watts Healthcare and its sister facilities have seen an abundance of these benefits. “While our radiologists generally only read from the Watts Health Center, physicians who have ordered exams from our sister clinics can access them almost immediately once the exam is performed,” said Mr. Johnson.

The benefit of connectivity has made patient care much easier on the physicians, but has also given patients additional value. Mr. Johnson continued to explain. “It saves the patients an immense amount of time; if we send a patient out for a referral to go see a specialist, the patient does not have to come here to get their images. We can provide the outside referring specialist access to the system, or we can send the studies over digitally, quite easily.”

According to Mr. Johnson, the PACS/RIS has been a substantial time saver for the facility as well. Quite frequently, patients may lose their hard copies of x-rays or other imaging exams, resulting in wasteful repetition of processes not to mention wasted time. In addition to the preservation of resources, it has also smoothed the process of physician orders. “Now [the physicians] go into the system and place their order, and that’s it – we receive it,” said Mr. Johnson. “They are totally ecstatic about the new system.”

## Customer Service Every Step of the Way

Mr. Johnson also cited superior customer service as a major reason behind Watts Healthcare’s decision to work with Novarad. “The Novarad support team is great,” said Mr. Johnson. “Their response times and ability to help us with any problems we have is excellent.” Between favorable experiences with Novarad’s support team and operational training offered at Novarad headquarters, Mr. Johnson and his department have had incredibly positive experiences making the switch. “I visited Novarad Headquarters for the initial training when we just starting out with [Novarad],” said Mr. Johnson. “I learned a lot, and Novarad was just so supportive.”

## Supporting Plans to Improve Care

Making the switch to Novarad has helped pave the way for greater innovation and progressively more timely and effective patient care at Watts—and the facility has a lot of plans for more improvements down the road. “We are looking to grow. We’re looking to add space to the facility so we can see more patients,” said Mr. Johnson. “Our next venture will be adding DEXA to our radiology department. It will be a simple plug-and-play for the PACS. I don’t see much, if anything, that would hinder us from moving forward with that.”

