

# Case Study

Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital  
Sitka, Alaska



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## Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital Deploys Novarad PACS/RIS to Improve Care Across Healthcare System

Alaskan hospital and healthcare system use Novarad software to provide integrated care to patients over multiple facilities and a wide geographic range.

Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital (MEH), located in Sitka, Alaska is a keystone of healthcare in Southeast Alaska. SEARHC (Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium) was established in 1975 under the provisions of the Indian Self-Determination Act. The intent of this legislation was to have Indian Health Service programs and facilities turned over to tribal management. The facility has expanded its offerings to all Alaskans. It is a member of the SEARHC network of care centers, which have over 13 locations throughout the panhandle region.

Covering 35,000 square miles and over 1,000 islands large and small, the Alaska panhandle is larger than the state of Maine. This diverse landscape, which includes six national parks and monuments, makes providing care to its 70,000 inhabitants a challenge.

Blaine Morris, Radiology Director at MEH, noted that one of their biggest challenges is transporting people into MEH for imaging from smaller satellite clinics throughout the region.

"If coordinating travel isn't complicated enough, our location in a temperate rainforest on the Pacific Ocean creates a lot of weather issues which lead to perpetual rescheduling," Morris explained.

Powerful communications capabilities are key to overcoming obstacles and Novarad helps to connect various sites throughout Southeastern Alaska by integrating PACS and RIS solutions.

## On-Call: 24/7/365 Support

With such short windows of time for treatment, it is crucial to MEH that everything works when they need it to work. This is where Novarad's 24/7/365 tech support becomes a big asset for the facility.

According to Morris, Novarad's support team has helped him resolve many issues in a prompt and efficient manner. "I had an issue that needed to be resolved. That same day I was able to work directly with a Novarad Support Engineer and get my problem resolved. It was quick."

## Novarad's Unique Training Model

As MEH is remotely located in the Alaska panhandle, they cannot easily send new employees to Novarad headquarters for product training. Novarad's "train-the-trainer" model allows the on-site expert to bring new technicians and radiologists up to speed on how to use Nova RIS and NovaPACS. This, coupled with an intuitive easy-to-use product, helps SEARHC get employees up to speed and working with Novarad, and an online library of FAQs and product training videos help to keep current employees up to speed with the latest updates and product additions.

In addition to this, the unique system in place at SEARHC allows data generated at satellite clinics to be fed into the RIS and PACS at MEH allowing doctors and radiologists to make use of this information when making a diagnoses. Additionally, MEH houses a radiology department that reads for multiple sites including Haines, Angoon, Kake, Hoonah and Klawock. Studies are performed at each of these sites and transmitted via a telerad to MEH to be read. Reports are then sent back to the originating location where doctors can consult and recommend next steps.

## Looking Forward

As SEARHC continues to expand its footprint to more remote sites throughout Southeast Alaska, Novarad is committed to ensuring all patients, providers and healthcare professionals have access to the data needed to make better diagnoses and improve care.

## Better Integration Leads to Better Coordination

The integrated PACS and RIS database makes scheduling and coordinating the influx of patients easy. When juggling air, hotel and care arrangements scheduling can get quite tricky. The bi-directional integration ensures that the scheduling and records remain accurate throughout the entire treatment process, which is unique to SEARHC.

This seamless integration ensures that when patients arrive via land, air or sea, MEH is ready and prepared for their appointment.

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— Blaine Morris  
Radiology Director, Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital

**Solutions  
used at  
Mt. Edgecumbe  
Hospital**

