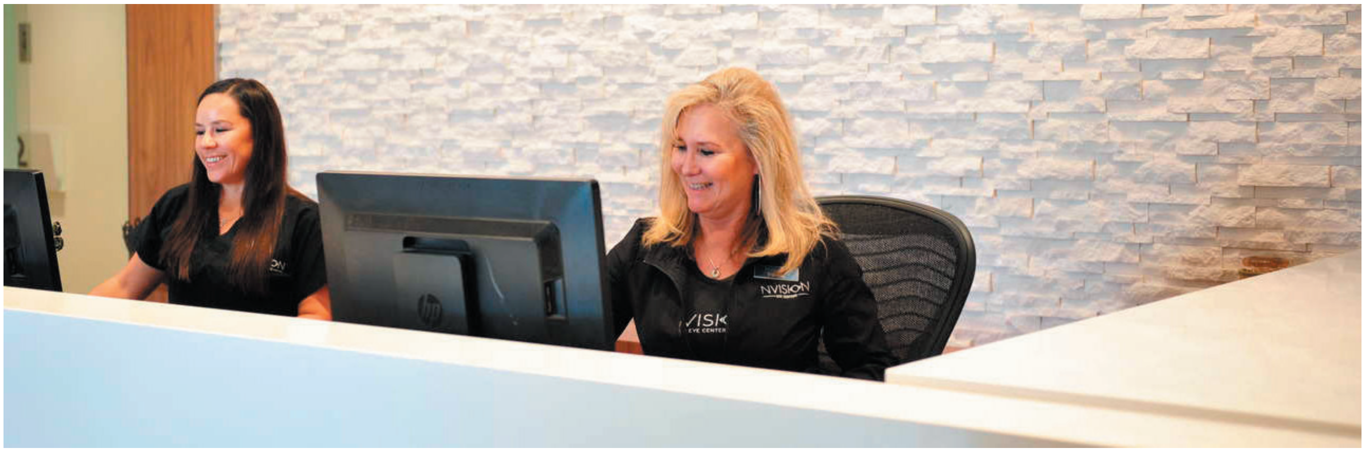
CASE STUDY

Multi-ASC Opthalmology Enterprise Leverages HST Software to Improve Operations, Support Growth



NVISION Eye Centers is a growing ophthalmology enterprise, encompassing 26 clinics and seven ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) across three states and Canada. NVISION offers affiliated practices autonomy, while also providing the advantages of a large enterprise, including administrative support, economies of scale in purchasing and technology, and the benefits of collaboration with nearly 100 professional colleagues working on the cutting edge of refractive (corrective) eye surgery and cataract surgery.

As NVISION has continued to add surgery centers, the organization identified the need for a flexible, enterprise-wide surgery center solution. NVISION found that solution in HSTpathways, an administrative/business software solution for ASCs that supports the autonomy of individual ophthalmological practices while also enabling enterprise-level administration and reporting.

NVISION®
EYE CENTERS

About NVISION® Eye Centers
NVISION® Eye Centers, Inc. operates a network of physician-owned ophthalmology centers, encompassing physician clinics and surgery centers. NVISION's surgery centers include both multi-specialty ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) and single specialty ASCs. NVISION® was founded in 2010 by Tom Tooma, M.D., a pioneer in the field of laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis (LASIK). NVISION®'s website is: https://www.nvisioncenters.com/

Services and Facilities
NVISION® Eye Centers includes 26 clinics and seven surgery centers serving Southern California, Northern California, Nevada, Oregon and Canada. Approximately 69,000 procedures a year are performed across the seven surgery centers, by a combination of staff physicians and affiliated physicians. Services include ophthalmological exams, LASIK, cataract surgery, corneal inlays, photorefractive keratectomy (PRK), small incision lenticule extraction (SMILE), refractive lens exchange (RLE) and additional cutting-edge ophthalmological surgical procedures.

Objective

To standardize and improve the management, operational efficiency and scalability of NVISION's growing eye surgery enterprise, which includes multiple ASCs dispersed across state and international boundaries.

Solution

- HSTpathways (ASC administrative/business software)

Business Benefits

- Enables centralized administration of multi-ASC enterprise
- Enterprise-wide reporting supports data-based decision-making
- Less clinician and staff time spent meeting external reporting requirements
- Improved workflow
- Increased operational efficiencies
- Easy access to data supports negotiations with supply vendors, payers
- Intuitive, enterprise platform facilitates scalability

NVISION Eye Centers is undergoing rapid growth. Independent ophthalmological surgery practices are attracted to NVISION because of the combined benefits of individual practice autonomy and centralized enterprise support. As the number of surgery centers encompassed by the organization grew, Stacy Gober, RN, BSN, Vice President of ASC Operations, NVISION® Eye Centers, recognized the need for a specialized software solution that would be flexible enough to support individual practice workflows, yet also provide standardization across the enterprise. Gober also knew she needed a solution that was easy to deploy, for rapid scaling.

As new ophthalmological practices came into the NVISION fold, Gober found many were managing operations with anything from Excel spreadsheets to software systems designed for practice management – but not for surgery centers. "Most practice management systems just aren't robust enough for the very specific needs of an ASC. We needed something designed specifically for ASC workflow, operations and reporting," Gober said.

Gober was familiar with HSTpathways based on her previous experience working in the ASC industry. "Several years previously, both my business office manager and I had worked at a facility that was a beta test site for HSTpathways. Based on that experience, we both knew that HSTpathways was the solution we needed at NVISION," Gober said.

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HSTpathways Deployed Across Multi-Specialty and Single-Specialty ASCs

NVISION initially deployed HSTpathways at Pacific Hills Surgery Center in Laguna Hills, CA. The three-room, multi-specialty center specializes in state-of-the-art ophthalmological surgery, but also offers outpatient surgical procedures in other specialties including dermatology, pain management, plastic surgery, podiatry and urology. In 2017, NVISION rolled out HSTpathways at The Eye Surgery Center of Northern California, an ophthalmic surgery center near Sacramento, CA. In 2018, NVISION deployed HSTpathways at Vision Surgery & Laser Center's Ambulatory Surgery Center in Roseburg, OR.

"We plan to deploy HSTpathways across all of our affiliated surgery centers by 2020," said Gober. NVISION currently includes seven surgery centers, but that number is a moving target. "We anticipate about 30 percent growth on the ASC side in just the next six months," she said.

Because HSTpathways is specifically designed for the cloud environment, it is easy to replicate rapidly across multiple centers. NVISION chose to self-host HSTpathways' enterprise platform, although HST also offers hosting services as an option. "For us, having HSTpathways linked to our organizational IT system has been a value-add," said Gober. "As our IT staff have become more familiar with how HSTpathways works, it has given them insight into ways we can improve our non-ASC, clinic IT functions as well."

ASC-Specific Design Improves Operational Efficiencies at Individual Centers

Both the multi-specialty ASCs and the single-specialty ASCs affiliated with NVISION have seen improvements in operational efficiency since deploying HSTpathways. Gober identified several specific areas where surgery centers have seen benefits:

SCHEDULING – Scheduling and registration functions within HSTpathways include user-configurable appointment sheet views, automated scheduling tools, daily schedule views, six-months scheduled cases views, modular blocks that can be configured according to specific physician or physician group preferences, built-in conflict checking, and scheduled resource views. In addition to the comprehensive nature of the functionality, Gober said, "HSTpathways is very intuitive to use. That makes it easy to train new and existing staff on how to navigate the software."

TRACKING CREDENTIALS – HSTpathways helps surgery center managers organize and track credentialing. Credentialing details ranging from Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registration numbers to medical license status to privileges at hospitals and other healthcare facilities can be organized and managed within HSTpathways' credentialing system.

INVENTORY MANAGEMENT – "Inventory management within HSTpathways is very streamlined and very useful," said Gober. Inventory management features include an item master, with associated periodic automatic replenishment (PAR) levels, on-time ordering, and schedule conflict checking; physical count functionality for inventory reconciliation and valuation; support for multiple supply locations and multiple vendors and ordering units; equipment tracking, including documenting warranty information and tracking service records; and the ability to capture usage, by physician and procedure, in order to support case cost analytics.

IMPLANT LOG – Part of the materials management capability is the implant log, which allows for detailed implant tracking and includes reporting tools for implant follow-up.

PHYSICIAN PREFERENCE CARD – The Physician Preference Card system in HSTpathways is integrated with the inventory and supply chain management tools. Physician preference cards are simple to create, maintain and update in the system.

REPORTING – "Our improved capacity to generate reports at each of our centers is among the top benefits we've seen since deploying HSTpathways," Gober said. "The built-in reports – for example, infection control reporting required by Medicare – are very well designed. We can pull that data quickly, as well as the other statistics we need to report to outside agencies. Reporting projects that used to take three hours to complete now take about 10 minutes. It's very easy for us to get that information out of HSTpathways."

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Reaping the Benefits of Enterprise-Wide Deployment

As the person responsible for oversight of all ASC facilities at NVISION, Gober recognized the advantages of enterprise-wide deployment of HSTpathways. The same features that contribute to efficiencies at the individual surgery center level have also enabled more effective operations at the enterprise level:

SCHEDULING – "Having centralized scheduling, where I can toggle between centers within the same software system, has really helped me manage my centers appropriately," said Gober.

TRACKING CREDENTIALS – "We have nearly 100 credentialed physicians as well as additional licensed and credentialed clinical staff," said Gober. "With so many credentials to keep track of, the centralized credentialing function is pretty vital. That helps make it possible to run multiple centers simultaneously."

INVENTORY MANAGEMENT – "Deploying HSTpathways across multiple sites has made it easier for us to manage inventory," Gober said. "For instance, we've been able to import the supply list from one eye center and basically copy and paste that into a new eye center we've brought on board, and then just make edits. This has been a huge time saver compared to other software systems which are just not as straightforward to replicate. With HSTpathways, we are able to use a standardized inventory across all of our centers, and then individual centers can choose whether they use a particular product or not."

IMPLANT LOG – "We use implants in cataract patients. Now that we have an enterprise table, we are able to gather that information, in real time, across all of our centers and make fiscal decisions based on what the surgeons are actually using," said Gober. "HSTpathways makes it really easy to retrieve that data."

PHYSICIAN PREFERENCE CARDS – "HSTpathways makes it easy for clinical staff to access and update preference cards when surgeons travel between different centers," Gober said. "It's much better than the old way, which was keeping track of physician preferences on paper index cards organized on a Rolodex!"

REPORTING – Gober said that the reporting capabilities of HSTpathways facilitates data-based decision-making at NVISION, both for individual facilities and at the enterprise level. "We can look at historical case cost trends over time and use that information to budget for the following year. We can look at payer contracts across our centers and compare them side-by-side. We can look at what vendors are charging us for supplies at the different centers and use that information in future negotiations. Now that all of this data is accessible, we are using it to make positive changes within our organization."

A Future-Facing Partnership

"When I first suggested to NVISION that HSTpathways' specialized ASC solution was necessary, there was some initial skepticism," Gober said. "But now that we have been using it for a while, everyone – from the Board of Directors, to the CFO and accountants, to the clinicians, to the support staff behind the scenes – understands the value.

"Prior to using HSTpathways, we sometimes made decisions based on anecdotal information or emotions. Are these payer contracts fair? Is a specific payer paying us correctly? Should certain payers be paying us more based on actual case costs? But now when these questions come up, I can say, 'Let's look at the data,' and we can use that information to make better decisions."

As NVISION continues to grow, the organization's reliance on HSTpathways' scalable, standardized enterprise platform will become even more important. "We needed a solution that would help us standardize across the enterprise and that would also help us grow," said Gober. "HSTpathways is doing exactly what we needed it to do."

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ABOUT HSTpathways

HSTpathways is a top-ranked, cloud-based Ambulatory Surgery Center software company dedicated to serving the ASC industry. HST was named KLAS Category Leader for Ambulatory Surgical Center Solutions in the "2018 Best in KLAS: Software & Services" report. Clients include more than 700 organizations such as freestanding ambulatory surgery centers and ASC-hospital joint ventures, and more than 40 multi-facility corporate enterprises. HST provides the most trusted enterprise software management solution available to the ASC industry. HST offers specialized software solutions to help ASC organizations achieve efficiencies with surgical scheduling, supply chain management, EHR clinical workflows, insurance and patient billing, and accounts receivable collections.
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