

[\[FOR MORE EVANS ARTICLES, CLICK HERE\]](#)

## System improves radiology care



By Jeff Troth, MEDDAC PAO

The Evans Army Community Hospital has fielded a new Picture Archival Communication System, or PACs in its radiology department that enables radiology technicians and doctors at Evans to be able to view any x-ray taken at a Department of Defense hospital or clinic.

The radiology department switched to Agfa's IMPAX system to archive and retrieve x-rays Feb. 26.

"With our old system there were only two of us here at Evans that could retrieve studies from another location, (such as the U.S.) Air Force Academy," said Staff Sgt. Eric Arellano, Evans' PACS administrator. "Colorado Springs is a market and we have to have that seamless communication between all the medical facilities and we didn't have that."

Arellano said under the old system it would take two to three days for Evans doctors to have access to X-rays taken at the Air Force Academy. The doctors had to contact the PACS office which would then contact the academy to send the images to Evans.

"Now the providers will have access to the x-ray with the push of just one button," Arellano said.

"The ability to communicate with the entire system will be nice," said Maj. Matthew Angelidis, the former chief of Evans Department of Emergency Medicine. "So, if a Soldier PCSs to Fort Carson their records will be available to us immediately."

Angelidis said the DoD-wide system will be an improvement in health care for those from other branches of the military who seek treatment at Evans.

"Since we can now access records for those in any service, we can limit the radiation exposure, by not repeating procedures already done," Angelidis said. "We will also be able to pull older records of an individual to compare to a new CT-Scan."

But the new system is not just for present day visits to the doctor but future ones as well, according to Arellano. The IMPAX also has an 8-petabyte (8 million gigabyte) long-term storage device that will store all past and future radiology images.

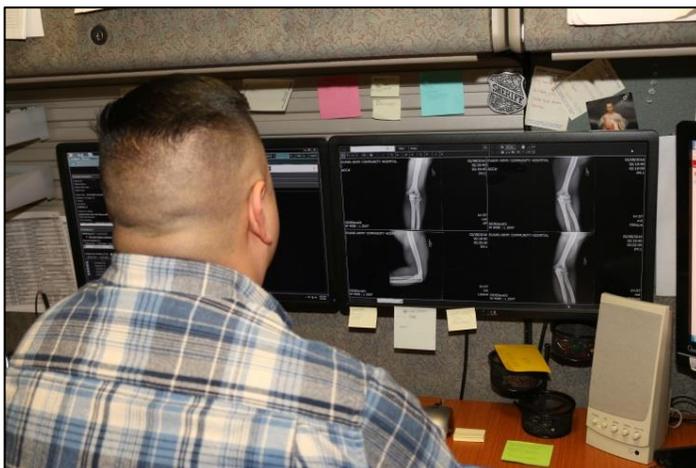
“It is a massive data storage, that will allow us to store images for your entire life,” said Arellano. “And this is a good thing, because instead of X-rays being logged under the sponsors social security number, we are now putting the individual’s DoD Identification number on them.”

With the old SSN system, there could be mistakes when a Soldier remarried and a doctor might pull up the previous spouse’s X-rays instead of the current one. Identifying the correct images for twins was also a challenge.

“That is not going to happen with the new system, as everyone has their own unique DoD ID number,” Arellano said. “A DoD ID stays with an individual throughout their life, even if they are born as a military dependent, then joins the Army then gets out and marries a service member. Their number transfers with them through all three stages.”

In the past that person’s records would have been first under their parent’s SSN, then theirs and finally under their spouse’s SSN. Arellano said that in order to get all of their records he and his PACS counterparts would have had to look at three systems to find all their medical records. With the IMPAX all their records will be kept under the same DoD ID number simplifying their search.

“Most of our patients will not realize what IMPAX has done to improve their healthcare,” said Arellano. “And that is a good thing, the switch to the new system has occurred and is already allowing us a seamless flow of images from anywhere someone might have been stationed previously.”



The Evans Army Community Hospital Radiology department has a new Picture Archival Communication System that allows doctors to view patients’ X-rays, taken at any DOD clinic or hospital. (Photo by Jeff Troth)