

### Firm helps tidy medical test mess

Unnecessary procedures eliminated  
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ROSE SIMONE  
RECORD STAFF

The doctor's waiting room is bursting at the seams, filled to capacity with ailing patients.

A 65-year-old man has a nagging prostate problem. A middle-aged woman is worried about a constant headache.

A 12-year-old girl is coughing uncontrollably.

They all want answers or tests to get the right answers. They don't want to wait months for a diagnosis.

Multiply this scene by the hundreds of family doctors in your city. Factor in thousands of patients already on waiting lists for tests at over-burdened hospital radiology departments and labs across the province.

Now you have a glimpse into why the health-care system is in trouble -- and why family doctors should be screaming for help.

It might speed things up if unnecessary tests were eliminated. It would also help if radiology and lab test reports came back to the computer in an organized way, so the doctor sees the urgent results first.

This may sound futuristic, but the technology to do all this is here. It's being marketed by a new company, Medicalis Corp., which recently moved into a new building on Riverbend Drive in Kitchener.

The system has been tested in a joint effort with Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, where 200 physicians used it in a pilot project.

Ron Kelly, president of Medicalis, says it's ready to spread across North America and around the world.

The company sells a computerized service to hospitals which can be accessed by family doctors who are referring patients to that hospital for various tests, such as CAT scans.

Doctors log on to the Internet to get information that will help them make the right decisions before tests are booked.

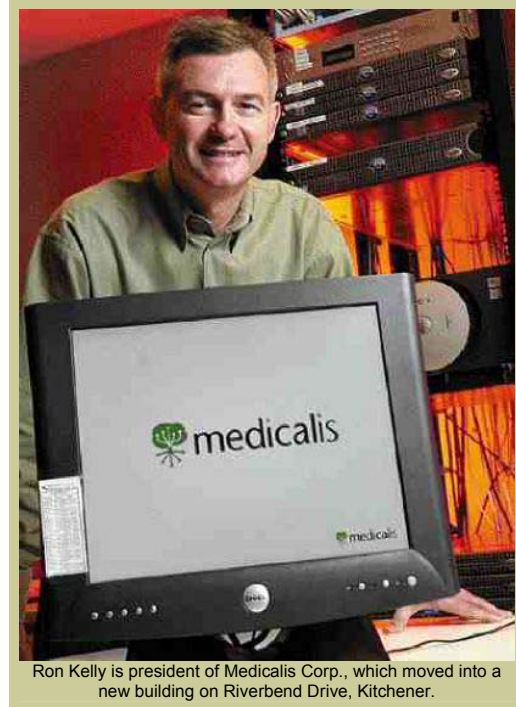
The hospital pays for the service on a "cost per study basis," so there is a small fee each time someone logs on with a request.

The computer servers located in Waterloo are constantly sorting and pushing out this wealth of information.

A doctor can find out, before the test is scheduled, how many people with this patient's symptoms learn what's wrong with them with this exam.

The data is updated in real time and the software was developed with the help of doctors to make sure they get the type of information they can use.

"Our people did the programming but this technology was built by doctors, for doctors," Kelly says.



Ron Kelly is president of Medicalis Corp., which moved into a new building on Riverbend Drive, Kitchener.

The knowledge needed to assess so many diseases is now so vast, no doctor can keep up with it all, he adds.

"What our technology does to is to give the physicians the availability of a radiologist, sitting right next to them through our software."

Although the hospital pays a fee for each information request processed, it improves the hospital's efficiency.

In the United States, the savings from eliminating unnecessary tests can be huge, Kelly says, because insurers often refuse to pay for those tests, leaving hospitals stuck with the bills.

But it also benefits the ailing health-care system in Canada.

It frees up resources and, more importantly, Kelly adds, it saves patients from unnecessary tests and help get to their real problems sooner.

Test results and radiology reports come back in an organized way, with the urgent, positive tests at the top of the doctor's computer screen.

[rsimone@therecord.com](mailto:rsimone@therecord.com)