



# HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

**Transforming Health Information Management for savings, growth, and risk mitigation.**

**A major New York university and teaching hospital faced serious patient health information management issues.** They thought their records and overall health information management protocols were okay, but it turned out that they had underestimated the severity of their health information management challenge.

**They had historically relied primarily on paper records, then introduced an EHR with a series of inconsistently managed records governance policies.**

The inconsistency and disconnect between the EHR and paper records meant that comprehensive patient information was difficult to access – finding information required pulling files from multiple on-site locations or from box storage with multiple off-site vendors.

In addition to the hassle of pulling records and correlating them with active patients, the vendors were often unable to find the needed patient file.

**The failure-to-find rate of any given request was as high as 63%; up to two-thirds of all records requests went unfulfilled because storage companies couldn't find them.**

In one case we requested a record and received the lost records of another hospital. The vendor reported the record as “found” but delivered **highly** protected health information *from another hospital*.

**This is not an unusual situation.** We have come across hard-to-find and missing records among many clients and their storage vendors.

The cost of not being able to find records is often underestimated.

## Results from patient health information management transformation

- Secured cost savings of \$3.5 million.
- Reduced storage vendor fees by 45%.
- Achieved 100% accuracy and findability of records.
- Ensured delivery of clinical information required in lawsuits, eliminating unnecessary settlements.
- Ensured 100% availability of audit information – the hospital became so reliable at delivering information that audits virtually stopped.
- Recovered 1500 square feet of floor space that the organization converted to revenue-generating clinical operations
- Placed the organization within the top 1% of health institutions for information compliance.

In the case of our client, the difficulty of accessing historical records impacted patient care. It created an inconsistency with the EHR and prevented them from analyzing complete and longitudinal data.

Another challenge was continuous Medicare and JHACO audits, as well patient lawsuits. The audits continued so regularly and were so rarely resolved that the auditors had their own office space.

Worse were the lawsuits. Due to the inability to produce

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records, our client just settled cases before they went to court – even cases that they would have won. Without complete records, our client had no evidence with which to defend themselves, and this cost them in the tens of millions of dollars each year.

## The Above PAR Healthcare problem definition

We started by defining the problem, which was:

1. **An insufficient institution-wide retention and governance policy.** Multiple governances existed throughout the organization – each department essentially had their own policy, and there was limited central guidance.
2. **A lack of oversight of vendors.** The general opacity of the situation allowed vendors to take advantage of the clients and their team. Many agreements existed with many vendors, often with high costs, overages, and heavy penalties for canceling service and permanently removing assets.
3. **A paper-based system** that was poorly indexed and poorly maintained and used valuable hospital space.

## The Above PAR Healthcare Solution

We completely restructured our client's records environment and team. This made the process of storage, retention, and retrieval easier, more reliable, and less risky. We designed a single-source environment for existing and new records by:

1. **Creating a comprehensive health information governance policy** – one policy that covered 23 departments. The policy aligned with regulatory and legal considerations and included a procedure to keep it up to date. An essential component was a multi-faceted, multi-department singular retention and governance policy.
2. **Designing and implementing a robust indexing and digitizing system**, including x-rays, and creating a pathway to be largely paper free within seven years. This eliminated inefficiencies

immediately and continued to improve over time.

3. **Consolidating vendors and renegotiating vendor contracts.** This helped us avoid most of the termination fees, while engaging a single vendor as a key partner to support the unique needs of the client.

The end result was a transformed organization that operated at substantially lower cost – with better results – on a path to paperless patient record keeping.

## ABOUT ABOVE PAR HEALTHCARE

Based in New York City, Above PAR Healthcare, a division of Above PAR Advisors, solves challenging problems in order to strengthen our clients' organizations. We don't just reorganize information. Our health information management transformation programs deliver results. Implementing a comprehensive program transforms the environment, mitigates risks, and can save millions of dollars.

Our programs pay for themselves, almost always within the first year (sometimes in the first few months), and generate benefits for years thereafter.

If you lack records transparency, we can help you make information management a value-adding exercise rather than a tedious waste of time, effort, and money.

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