

CASE STUDY

# Health System Enhances Epic Environment & Improves Informed Consent with Interlace Health



## An overview of informed consent in today's clinical settings

While advances in technology bring the power to improve interactions between patient and provider, procedural consents often remain a lingering source of manual and paper intensive processes throughout organizations.

In fact, **76% of organizations still use paper forms to document the critical process of informed consent vs. leveraging electronic signature technology.**<sup>1</sup>

While informed consent represents much more than a signature on a form, the effectiveness of the process in which the consent signature is obtained is extremely important.

The inefficiencies inherent to paper-based consent form processes can result in missing or improperly scanned forms. **According to The Joint Commission, more than 500 organizations recently experienced compliance issues due to missing informed consent forms.**<sup>2</sup>

For many health systems, improving the informed consent process has quickly become integral to a proactive approach to key strategic initiatives such as patient experience, cost savings, and risk management.



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**A large university medical center located in the South, started to take notice of the costly repercussions of sticking to the informed consent status quo. Building off their past success with Interlace Health, they turned to their technology partner to help them deliver a mobile electronic consent solution that would bring a more streamlined, reliable, and consistent informed consent process to enhance their EHR.**

## **THE PROBLEM: MISSING CONSENTS**

**Poor Patient & Staff Experience, Surgical Delays, and Process Inefficiencies**

With a reliance on paper for capturing the critical process of informed consent, the university hospital was struggling to meet compliance objectives.

The organization had several issues with the consent process that directly impacted the patient experience, cost, productivity, operation room utilization, and risk management.

- ◆ Patients were being asked for signatures multiple times since the consent could not be located at the time of procedure.
- ◆ Due to the organization's unique structure, which includes many residents rotating across multiple departments each year and the large size of their facility (over 700 beds), standardization and simplification of the process across the system was a priority.
- ◆ Most importantly, due to the nature of paper processes, many consents were lost, misplaced, or improperly archived into their Epic Electronic Health Record – leading to surgical delays and cancellations.

The technology enabled them to achieve their goal of standardizing their consent template.

Recognized as being at the forefront of the latest medical and technological advances, the healthcare organization realized their current paper-based process of capturing patient informed consent opened an unwanted door of risk and inefficiencies. The costs associated with a paper-based consent process, paired with the repercussions of an idle procedure room, left the organization searching for a way to streamline the crucial process.

## **THE SOLUTION: ELECTRONIC CONSENT**

**The health system needed a new way to ensure they were properly capturing consent, accelerating workflow, and reducing risks associated with missing forms. The organization expanded their use of Interlace Health technologies with the addition of electronic informed consent.**

The technology enabled them to achieve their goal of standardizing their consent template. **By utilizing their database of procedures, they now have one standardized form for electronic consent, with the ability to quickly and easily customize the form per procedure to include associated risks, benefits, etc.**

The health system viewed eConsents as a solution to some key challenges around informed consent. These included:

- ◆ mobile app for easier patient identification on the go via wristband barcode reading technology
- ◆ integration with Epic EHR environment
- ◆ increased visibility of the consent forms to the care team
- ◆ drop down selection for procedures
- ◆ easier forms creation
- ◆ reduction in scanning

## IMPLEMENTATION: THE START TO SUCCESS & ADOPTION

The health system was very committed to ensuring the success of the eConsent technology and had physician champions from each department supporting the implementation of the new technology across the organization.

The scope of their initial implementation included three pilot areas. The hospital collected feedback from these departments, then rolled out to the remaining hospital departments and provider clinics.

### A Closer Look at the Paper Problem

The state of the three departments before their eConsent implementation:

- **VIR (Vascular Interventional Radiology)** - usually scheduled procedures in advance; techs would prep a packet the day prior to the procedure and provide paper packet to the provider prior to the procedure.
- **OR Holding** – consents were sometimes obtained in the clinic during the pre-surgical exam, but were often not archived in time, causing patients to re-consent on day of surgery. Residents were responsible for obtaining consent for in-house patients, but paper consents were often forgotten in their pockets.
- **Ophthalmology** – used signature devices in each room. Tech would often obtain signature from patient prior to physician explaining the procedure. This process impacted the patient experience, as the device was hard to read for their mostly elderly patient population with sight issues.

“The adoption in these three pilot departments was excellent due to ease of use and the benefit of having the consent available immediately within the archive system. **Our employees love it.** We went live with them on a Monday, and when we went back to wrap up with them on a Wednesday, they were like, “Why are you all here? We got this.”

-Manager, HIM and Financial IT Applications

## THE RESULT: STREAMLINED WORKFLOW

**Interlace Health's Informed Consent Solution** presents clinicians with a simple, intuitive, and straight-forward process to capture consents. Simply by scanning the barcode on a patient's wristband or the sticker on a form, the appropriate forms for that patient are launched for review and completion.

The patient can read the form on a tablet device at the point-of-care, and conveniently sign the form electronically with their finger or stylus. Staff can then quickly self-sign the form and date-time stamps are automatically applied. Upon the submission of the consent form, it is archived instantly into Epic – preventing lost information and making documentation instantly visible to the care team.

The eConsent solution has significantly cut costs associated with paper, toner, printing, scanning, and storage. In addition to a large financial savings, the organization is now confident in their ability to meet compliance requirements, while creating a more efficient and standardized consent experience for staff and patients.

Prior to implementing their mobile eConsent solution, the nurses were doing all the pre-work for informed consent. Before they switched to iPads for eConsent, the nurses were pulling out paper consent and storing them on a clipboard for the doctors to have the next day if they couldn't find the completed consent in the system.

**The nurses are now completely out of the informed consent process and have gained valuable time back to spend on patient-centric activities.**

“We don't do anything with the iPad. The fellows, the residents, the providers, they have them, and they do the whole process right there. With the nurses out of the consent process, we have gained time back in our day and our organization has gained efficiency there.”

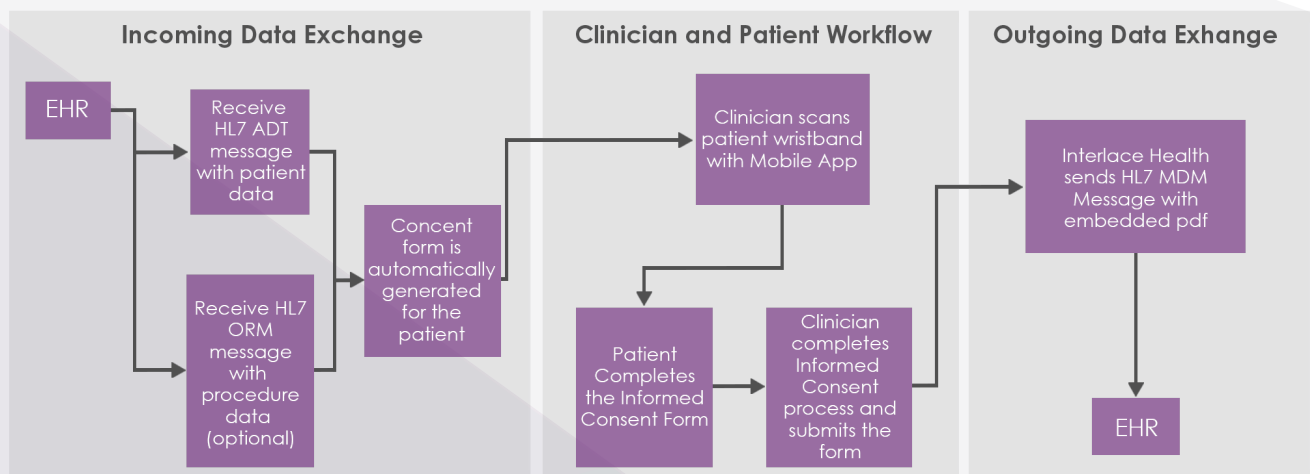
-Registered Nurse



## ENHANCED INTEROPERABILITY

While paper consents get lost or must be carried around in a paper chart until they are scanned into the EHR, eConsent forms are instantly archived into the EHR. This ensures the document is archived correctly every time. It is also easy to access the form in pre-op, as well as confirm in the OR during time-out. Due to the solution's seamless EHR integration, consent forms are automatically generated by receiving ORM messages via HL7.

This streamlines the clinician's workflow and ensures all appropriate consents are completed. Patient data prefills the forms for faster completion and ensures proper storage with the patient record through HL7 or FHIR.



This seamless integration between Interlace Health and Epic is crucial to the organization as they strive to eliminate human error, standardize processes, and accelerate form completion.

## A BETTER CONSENT PROCESS FOR PATIENTS & STAFF

With the electronic mobile consent solution in place, clinicians aren't interrupted in their workflows, patients are more satisfied, compliance becomes almost guaranteed, and procedures aren't delayed due to lost paperwork. Delivering forms at the point-of-care more effectively has helped the university hospital meet the required legal and ethical obligation to ensure that the elements of adequate informed consent are met and documented.

“Interlace Health’s Informed Consent Solution is a win-win for patients and staff. It enhances patient satisfaction, patient safety, and provides you with a completed medical record.”

-Manager, HIM and Financial IT Applications



**INTERLACE**  
HEALTH

Making healthcare *better*  
one process at a time.

### About Interlace Health

Interlace Health (formerly FormFast) lives at the intersection of the relationships, environments, and experiences at the heart of modern health care. By enabling seamless data capture and information exchange among providers, staff, and patients, Interlace Health solves many of health care's central challenges through process transformation. The result for its clients is reduced costs, increased collections, uplifted patient experiences, improved operational efficiency, and enhanced support of an organization's integration strategy.

Interlace Health's platform enables several solutions that are accessible by clinicians and patients inside and outside the walls of the health care system. These include patient intake, revenue cycle management, electronic consent, forms-on-demand and downtime contingency. To learn more about how the company is improving health care workflow, visit [www.interlacehealth.com](http://www.interlacehealth.com).

For more information on how  
an electronic consenting process  
can benefit your organization,  
and a customized demo, visit  
[interlacehealth.com/contact](http://interlacehealth.com/contact)

### SOURCES

1. [1. Source: Becker's Hospital Review](#)
2. [2. Source: The Joint Commission](#)