

LIS Case Study

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By Laura Lehrhoff

RDL Reference Laboratory, Los Angeles, was established in 1977 by two UCLA-trained rheumatologists, Robert I. Morris, MD, and Allan L. Metzger, MD. After three years of practice following their fellowships, they found inconsistent performance by both local and national commercial laboratories in ANA testing and inadequate availability of autoimmune disease testing. Based on these conditions, Drs. Morris and Metzger decided to form their own laboratory, RDL Reference Laboratory, to ensure quality testing that could be trusted.

Unique Needs

Initially, the menu contained only autoimmune tests, but over the years the menu expanded to include infectious disease testing. Physicians in most sub-specialties use these services and many university teaching centers, hospitals, other laboratories, researchers and biomedical companies forward specimens daily. With the growth of the test menu, the company's divisions and staff have also increased.

As rheumatologists and laboratorians, the directors have created and offer profiles and panels that provide the ordering physician an array of selected tests that help resolve the various clinical problems faced in practice without increasing unnecessary costs.

RDL Reference Laboratory is dedicated to the principles of excellence and consistency in esoteric laboratory testing. RDL is committed to aiding the clinician in early diagnosis and continued disease management through the design of profiles and panels that provide the ordering physician an array of selected tests. These tests assist to resolve the various clinical problems faced in practice in the most cost-effective manner possible using cutting-edge technology performed solely by experienced, licensed professionals.

A Complete LIS

To meet the technology demands of the laboratory and its clients, RDL has invested in its laboratory information system (LIS), billing and customer service needs. Utilizing redundant server technology and RAID-5 for all data repository, RDL has streamlined its operations and provides its clients with secure Web-based reporting and electronic medical record (EMR) links to a variety of its accounts nationwide.

In choosing a vendor, the company needed a flexible, customizable system that offered reliable service and support. Because of RDL's wide range of unique needs, the lab had to be sure that all requirements could be met by the selected vendor.

Computer Service & Support Inc. (CSS), Linwood, NJ, was chosen in 1995 to provide its LIS, billing, client service and outreach needs. CSS has continued to provide upgrades and new products over the past 12 years. The CLS-2000 LIS system provides everything from rules-based order processing to EMR links. RDL's facility has more than 50 workstations connected to a WAN that supports on-demand label generation and network printing. The laboratory has a variety of host query interfaces that has further streamlined its operation. CSS has worked with the facility to customize interfaces to accommodate RDL's reporting requirements.

Billing, Reports

As a nationwide provider of specialized testing, RDL needs a flexible and integrated billing system to accommodate electronic billing for virtually every insurance carrier in the United States. The LIS from CSS meets this need, as all California Medicare and Medical claims are sent directly via a direct link. All third-party claims are sent via a secure Web portal to Medavant Health.

The AR-2000, the billing system from CSS capable of full integration into the LIS, generates customized monthly invoices that include multi-fee and contractual pricing requirements. The software is ASNI-4010, NPI and HIPAA compliant.

One of the primary selection criteria of an LIS vendor was the level of support and customization to the LIS and billing system that would be included in future releases. CSS has surpassed expectations in the service and support provided. The technical support team works with RDL and its clients' IT staff if required for special projects and EMR links.

Another special need of RDL comes from its Clinical Trials Division, which provides comprehensive laboratory services to meet the dynamic needs of a broad range of biotechnology and pharmaceutical clients. As a fully credentialed, privately owned reference lab, RDL has the unique ability to provide the research and development community the personalized service of a small company coupled with the emerging technologies of top industry leaders.

The LIS enables the Trials Division to customize data exports in a variety of formats (HL-7, Excel, XML, etc.). Reports can be automatically faxed to sponsor and researcher with compliant tracking. RDL has 12 years of result data archived on the LIS. Report data from all previous versions is compatible with the current software. There is no need to go to another archive system or tape to retrieve past report data. CSS has worked directly with clinical trials customers to provide custom data exports.

The ability of the lab software solutions from CSS to meet the diverse needs of RDL and to grow and customize with the lab has had a noticeable positive impact on workflow and operations throughout the laboratory.

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