

YOUR MEDICAL IMAGING CLOUD

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

## **It's Time to Ditch the Disk:**

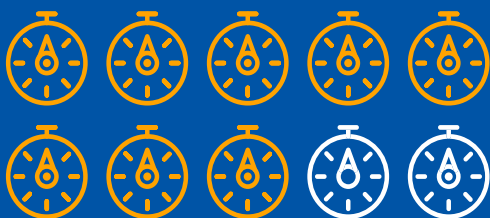
Executive Insights from Ambra Health, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Mount Sinai, and Weill Cornell Medical College

## Introduction

CDs still act as the prevalent method of image exchange across the US healthcare system despite 75% of healthcare experts surveyed in a consumer report believing that eliminating CDs would improve patient care.<sup>1</sup>

CDs place an enormous amount of pressure on patients. We are asking a patient, who is often ill or worried about a condition, to drive and pick-up a CD of their imaging. They are then asked to be responsible for this CD. The same CD can easily be lost, broken, or encrypted leading to a less than efficient appointment. Without the proper information and prior imaging in hand, a provider may have to order new imaging test. Ambra Health **conducted a patient survey** which found a large disparity between what patients want and what they are receiving. About 80% of patients want access to their imaging yet only about a quarter actually have that access.<sup>2</sup>

CDs impede the lives of providers and administrators, too. Healthcare facilities are wasting over 84 days per year on CD upload, burning, and patient data matching.<sup>3</sup> Relying on a medium based transfer method like CDs leads to increased spending for hospitals, sometimes well over \$100,000 a year on courier costs alone.



**Over 81% of consumers**  
surveyed said “handling CDs  
consumes too much of my  
or my co-workers time.”

Understanding the Impact of CDs Survey

**In this executive brief, imaging thought leaders share insights on:**

- The negative impact of CDs on patient care.
- Interoperability and standards across image exchange.
- Money and time wasted by facilities and patients alike.

<sup>1</sup> #DitchTheDisk Supported by Ambra Health. (2019). Understanding the Impact of CDs Survey [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://ditchthedisk.com/survey/>

<sup>2</sup> “Era of Change: Today’s Healthcare Consumer: Ambra Health: Your Medical Imaging Cloud.” Ambra Health, [ambrahealth.com/ebook/era-change-todays-healthcare-consumer/](https://ambrahealth.com/ebook/era-change-todays-healthcare-consumer/)

<sup>3</sup> #DitchTheDisk Supported by Ambra Health. (2019). The True Cost of CDs [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://ditchthedisk.com/survey/>

At a [recent webinar](#) sponsored by Ambra Health and hosted by SIIM, imaging informatics thought leaders shared insights on the impact of CDs across healthcare.

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*Why are we putting this burden on our patients and making them navigate our complex health system?”*

- DR. GERALDINE MCGINTY, MD, MBA, FACR

#### FEATURED SPEAKERS



**Geraldine B. McGinty, MD, MBA, FACR**  
Weill Cornell Medical College



**David S. Mendelson, MD**  
Vice Chair Radiology IT,  
Mount Sinai Department of Radiology



**Laurie A. Perry, RN**  
Lead System Analyst,  
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Ctr



**Morris J. Panner, JD**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Ambra Health

## Ditch the Disk: 3 Executive Insights The Negative Impact of CDs on Patient Care

Dr. Geraldine McGinty has been an outspoken voice in healthcare when it comes to eliminating CDs. In a recent article in the [JACR](#), she noted how anachronistic the use of CDs is and how we must do better for our patients.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. David Mendelson noted that patients who need to move their imaging are often the sickest patients and should be focused on their illness. “CDs are major distraction for a patient who should be primarily focused on their health,” he said.

CDs are a major impediment to care in cases of trauma with up to 50% of patients having at least one CT before they are transferred from one facility to the next. Oftentimes, the receiving facility is unable to see patient imaging ahead of their arrival, wasting time as they must reassess the case when the

<sup>4</sup> McGinty, Geraldine B. “#DitchtheDisk.” JACR: Journal of the American College of Radiology, 2019, [www.jacr.org/article/S1546-1440\(19\)30060-2/abstract](http://www.jacr.org/article/S1546-1440(19)30060-2/abstract).

patient arrives through the ER doors. This delay can lead up to 25 minutes of time wasted, an alarming number in the world of trauma.<sup>5</sup> Trauma is an excellent example of a topic that Laurie Perry brought to our panel's attention; patients want access, but they don't want to be responsible for the transfer of their imaging from facility to facility. "Facilities need to focus on facility-to-facility image sharing if they really want to improve the lives of their patients," she said.

Even when patients are provided with access to an image-enabled patient portal, there is often no ability to download or share the imaging when needed. Imagine having emails that you could only view but not reply, forward, or easily copy.

## Interoperability and Standards Across Image Exchange

As a systems administrator, Laurie Perry is truly in the trenches of CD transfer, with over 30,000 outside studies being imported into the Cincinnati Children's PACS just last year. Laurie said, "If we are going to #DitchTheDisk, we need to make electronic imaging sharing better. Various facilities are implementing different solutions and frequently, vendors aren't working together. You can come up with the best solution for your facility, but the moment you need to share with someone outside the walls of your hospital, things get complicated. Until we focus more on facility transfer to transfer, we won't be able to get rid of CDs," said Laurie. In fact, Laurie notes, many facilities even encrypt their CDs leading to a total blocking of information.

Today, Cincinnati Children's uses gateways from Ambra Health to share and receive images from other sites and route them to where they need to be when they need to be there. The use of these gateways has helped to reduce redundant imaging and additional anesthesia for duplicate MRI procedures among their pediatric population. Although the installation of gateways have led to some progress, there is still a long way to go. Laurie noted that many smaller institutions don't have the IT staff to devote to implementing these solutions. Additionally, a variety of barriers have to be overcome related to agreements and policies. For instance, legacy arrangements around outside image management

<sup>5</sup> Emick, Dawn M, et al. "Repeat Imaging in Trauma Transfers: a Retrospective Analysis of Computed Tomography Scans Repeated upon Arrival to a Level I Trauma Center." The Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery, U.S. National Library of Medicine, May 2012, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22673252](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22673252).

often have to be changed in favor of a new cloud suite. Education around cloud security needs to take place across healthcare providers as some institutions' policies still dictate that images be shared only via CD/DVD vs. uploading to the cloud.

Dr. Mendelson has been heavily involved in image sharing initiatives on a national scale over the years. He was a leader in the RSNA Image Share project which put images directly in the hands of over 35,000 patients. However, "I think this is still a huge minority of patients. What patients really want to know is that on their request we can move imaging on their behalf with minimal effort," said Dr. Mendelson.

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*We don't care what a vendor does under the hood, as long as they can abide by one IHE profile to share with other networks."*

- DR. DAVID MENDELSON.

Radiology is far ahead of the rest of the healthcare world due to DICOM; we've already developed one clear cut language and developed DICOM 3 as a standard. RSNA image sharing is now focused on standards, testing programs for vendors, and introducing a trusted framework nationally. Now, working with Care Equality as part of **Sequoia Project**, informatics leaders are trying to establish a national project where standards-based independent radiology departments can exchange with each other. The initiative is working on an implementation guide that features descriptions of HIEs across the country and what vendors need to have in place to share with one another.

#### CAREQUALITY IMAGE SHARING IG SUPPLEMENT

We are hopeful that this will offer a way to empower DICOM exchange under the Carequality Framework with National Impact

#### Foundation is IHE XCA-I profile that defines network to network connections

- Networks can be based on IHE XDS-I or some facsimile
- Some flexibility for variations in local patient ID management and exchange protocols
- Looks like XDS-I from the outside

**Low bar of entry to participate.**

#### AUDIENCE QUESTION

*"If you are at a facility outside of a geographic area, is there a universal list of people that accept electronic exchanges?"*



**DR. GERADLINE MCGINTY** - "We don't! Organizations like the ACR offer different accreditations for certain imaging exams and facilities. We could offer an accreditation for facilities where you can receive your imaging electronically."



**DR. DAVID MENDELSON** - "Each network on Care Equality exposes their list of patients to other institutions in a searchable fashion. Imaging isn't there yet, but will hopefully be one day soon!"

## Time & Money Wasted by Facilities and Patients

The failure to implement an image sharing solution often impacts the daily workflow of clinicians outside of radiology, too. At any specialty heavy hospitals, clinicians want to see imaging as quickly as possible to determine if they are able to fit a patient into their schedule that day.

“As a physician, I can't imagine giving a less than perfect read to a patient because I can't get access to their past exams. That is a disservice to the patient.”

- DR. GERALDINE MCGINTY, MD, MBA, FACR

There is a new push among their physicians due to value-based care initiatives to view prior patient imaging from other sites. Relying on patients to bring in CDs or waiting on outside sites to mail CDs is a slow and tedious process that can take weeks. Additionally, even when facilities or imaging centers have an electronic image sharing or viewing tool, the process often involves a complex system download and an endless amount of passwords.

Prior imaging is incredibly important to the patient's health record. “Your normal isn't my normal. We can only really view the holistic health record of an individual in the context of their own records” says, Dr. McGinty.



74% of administrators believe **eliminating CDs would improve job satisfaction.**

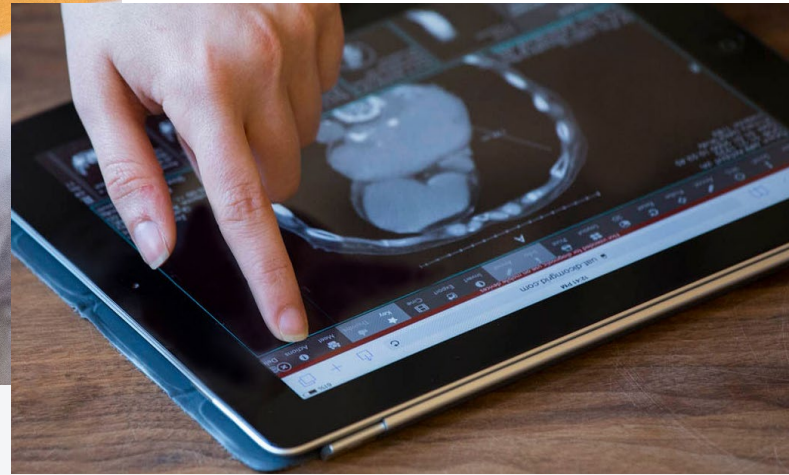
Understanding the Impact of CDs Survey

The negative impact of CDs affects a facilities bottom line, too. Data has shown that the average facility burns about 1911 CDs per month. With each CD upload taking a few minutes (in a best case scenario), that could waste hours each day. Administrators and clinicians are frustrated by this enormous waste of time with over 74% believing that eliminating CDs could increase job satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> Let's stop wasting physician, administrator, and patient time with CDs. It is time to #DitchTheDisk and move to the Cloud.



How much could your healthcare organization save this year by eliminating CDs? Find out the true cost of CDs at [ditchthedisk.com](https://ditchthedisk.com).





## About Ambra Health

Ambra Health is a medical data and image management SaaS company. Intuitive, flexible, scalable and highly interoperable, the Ambra cloud platform is designed to serve as the backbone of imaging innovation and progress for healthcare providers. It empowers some of the largest health systems such as Memorial Hermann and New England Baptist Hospital as well as radiology practices, subspecialty practices, and clinical research organizations to dramatically improve imaging and collaborative care workflows. As expert partners, we listen to our customers, understand their needs, and apply our extensive knowledge to deliver innovative medical image management solutions for the future of healthcare, now. Discover what the Ambra medical imaging cloud can do for you at [ambrahealth.com](https://ambrahealth.com).

### AMBRA HEALTH SUPPORTS #DITCHTHEDISK

In support of this campaign, Ambra launched the [#DitchTheDisk website](https://ditchthedisk.com) to help healthcare leaders, administrators, and IT professionals understand the impact and the costs of CDs for both their bottom line and their patients' outcomes. The site includes a CD cost calculator and a new eBook which detail the reasons why CDs are a burden and how leading facilities across the country have eliminated them.

Ambra Health has seen healthcare organizations of all types switch to its cloud platform for image exchange and storage. From January of 2019 through today, Ambra has added 57 new customers, bringing its total to over 450 customers and 6 billion images under management.

Facilities can visit the [#DitchTheDisk website](https://ditchthedisk.com) to utilize these resources on CD elimination.