



## Case Study: eOptimize Generates Immediate Productivity Gains for Memorial Health

Memorial Health Services, one of Los Angeles and Orange County's leading health care providers, is a large, not-for-profit healthcare delivery organization that is well known for its MemorialCare brand of service provision. This innovative concept in health care delivery is created by physicians and other health care professionals who select the highest standards of care for their patients. These standards are determined by outcomes that surpass national benchmarks for many major diagnostic groups. Memorial Health recognized that its enterprise scheduling strategy required similar innovation and progressive strategy, and so initiated a scheduling project that would support the mission, vision and values of the MemorialCare group – operational excellence in the delivery of superior health services.

Memorial selected eOptimize Inc. for its innovative approach to enterprise scheduling and critical resource management in the demanding healthcare environment. eOptimize's About:Time™ for Healthcare is an award-winning enterprise scheduling solution that delivers tangible benefit to all stakeholders, including the healthcare enterprise, scheduling staff, care providers, and the patients themselves.

## Executive Summary

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Anaheim Memorial Medical Center (AMMC) performs hundreds of procedures each day, activities for which the centralized scheduling department provide booking services. Anaheim experienced a number of challenges when scheduling with its previous scheduling product in a diverse and dynamic multi-disciplinary healthcare environment, including:

- Stakeholder complaints and dissatisfaction with the scheduling experience
- Inconsistent scheduling outcomes
- Difficulty scheduling complex appointments
- Competition for resources with very aggressive activity schedules
- Legacy system did not provide a pathway to meet future needs

The project was highly collaborative and concluded successfully following a compressed timeline. John Stewart, Information Systems Director at Anaheim Memorial Medical Center remarked, "The eOptimize project team was undoubtedly one of the best we have ever worked with. From the start, the team was dedicated, extremely knowledgeable, flexible, and always on task. As a result, we were able to go from initial software installation to a live scheduling system in 90 days." The hospital has recognized a number of substantial benefits and opportunities, including:

- Streamlined scheduling, larger call volumes improve scheduling services
- Consistent, repeatable scheduling practices
- Effective decision support saves time and improves productivity
- Optimized scheduling eliminates schedule gaps and maximizes resource utilization increasing revenue
- Deployment opportunities enhance business initiatives and provide investment protection

"The high-profile scheduling department is a key factor in the relationship between our customers and care providers", said John Stewart, as he described business purpose of the project. "Our focus is to improve service delivery – reduce internal and external complaints regarding the scheduling experience and provide a flexible platform moving forward. We needed a next-generation scheduling system that leverages existing tools and technologies, while providing the growth capability, technically and functionally, to support those future business initiatives."

## Highlights

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### Problem - Stakeholder complaints and dissatisfaction with scheduling experience

Anaheim Memorial recognized that stakeholder dissatisfaction with scheduling was a problem that needed resolution. "The high-profile scheduling department is a key factor in the relationship between our customers and care providers", said John Stewart. "Our focus is to improve service delivery – reduce internal and external complaints regarding the scheduling experience."

### Solution - Faster scheduling, larger call volumes improve scheduling services

Since implementing About:Time for Healthcare, Anaheim Memorial has improved the services it delivers to stakeholders, including patients and physicians. In fact, project metrics indicate that previous hourly call volumes were surpassed within *one* hour of the system go-live. "The number of calls that the schedulers answer has significantly increased, with less time taken to complete the scheduling requests than with the previous system," explained Sharon McKinney, Director of Imaging Services at AMMC. "This allows us to meet the needs of our customers – the patients and the medical community".

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### Problem - Inconsistent Scheduling Outcomes

"Our central scheduling department had been plagued with complaints about the usability of our previous scheduling system," said John Stewart. The legacy scheduling application made it difficult to maintain consistent, accurate practices across the scheduling department.



### **Solution - Consistent, repeatable scheduling practices**

"This system is very flexible – it is great to finally have a system that allows us to do what we want when we want", said Terri Stagner, Lead Patient Administration Representative. The About:Time for Healthcare system provides the requisite flexibility to support the complex and diverse scheduling needs of the healthcare enterprise. Through the use of the eOptimize system, real-time access to information is available to all members of the care delivery process. The optimized scheduling process ensures that all care protocols - which may consist of precedence relationships, procedural conflicts, and event sequencing - are maintained automatically, resulting in increased consistency and accuracy in care provision.

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### **Problem - Difficulty scheduling complex appointments**

Anaheim Memorial's legacy scheduling application required a significant amount of manual intervention, which Terri Stagner, Lead Patient Administration Representative, described as "very time consuming". "Previously when scheduling multiple exams for a patient, across departments, we would have to check across all of the days and verify resources individually."

### **Solution - Effective decision support saves time and improves productivity**

"We have highly capable staff, working in a very dynamic and challenging environment," noted Sharon McKinney, Director of Imaging Services at AMMC. "Our goal is to provide them with tools that support their capabilities – not restrict them. Our scheduling staff really like the eOptimize system – and an increase in staff satisfaction not only results in less staff turnover, it also reinforces the collaborative nature of our care delivery system."

The time saved when scheduling clinical or medical procedures translates into a savings in administrative overhead. If 25 minutes are saved for each of these scheduling scenarios - even once a day - administrative time savings amount to 110 hrs per year per clinic/department. That time - and its related cost - can be allocated to enhancing service capacity, provision of care, or any other business initiative.

About:Time for Healthcare has streamlined the scheduling process from point-of-call to appointment request completion. Enhanced functional capabilities have directly contributed to efficiencies in process flow and reduced operational overhead. As Terri Stagner relates, "Now we have a list of options presented to us - this can save 20-30 minutes in each instance, and that happens multiple times a day!"

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### **Problem - Competition for resources with very aggressive activity schedules**

Ensuring the effective delivery of healthcare services has inherent complexities and challenges. One of the most significant factors is the high competition for valuable resources. Whether equipment, rooms or healthcare providers, these resources must be utilized appropriately within their time availabilities. This means reducing 'gaps' in schedules and ensuring consideration for personal calendars and other factors affecting scheduling availability, to ensure cost-effective utilization of the appropriate resources.

### **Solution - Optimized scheduling eliminates schedule gaps and maximizes resource utilization**

About:Time for Healthcare automatically eliminates gaps in resource schedules to maximize resource availability and earning capacity. Combined with effective business intelligence, hospitals like Anaheim Memorial can now create new revenue opportunities. Given a diagnostic modality with an average procedure charge of \$250, even 15 or 20 minutes of 'new' availability per day can result in 260 additional procedures per year, or \$65,000 of new revenue per modality – not to mention decreases in patient wait times.

Optimized resource utilization can have a profound effect on the manner in which departments are staffed and managed. About:Time for Healthcare's comprehensive reporting and appointment modules ensures superior decision support and comprehensive retrospective analysis. The ability to generate business intelligence, such as comparisons between scheduled and actual activities, facilitates effective enterprise-wide management of high-volume modalities and in-demand resources.

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### **Problem – Legacy system did not provide a pathway to meet future needs**

While each solution has its own functional features that may support some immediate business needs, it is critical for cost containment and investment protection to ensure that there is substantial longevity with any departmental or enterprise system. At Anaheim Memorial, current and future business initiatives were unsupported by a system that lacked the potential to sustain and grow with the enterprise.

### **Solution - Deployment opportunities enhance business initiatives and provide investment protection**

"With the selection and implementation of eOptimize's solution, we have been able to provide our scheduling staff with a next-generation scheduling system that supports and compliments our customer service and business initiatives", added John Stewart. "As a browser-based technology built on the Microsoft .NET framework, we are now able to deploy the capabilities of About:Time for Healthcare to multiple locations with relative ease – which affords us the flexibility to expand our scheduling reach to include physician offices and eventually patients."

About:Time for Healthcare .NET Web Service interfaces create opportunities for sharing advanced scheduling services across corporate boundaries and technology platforms. The product's award-winning 'anytime, anywhere' collaboration strategy ensures authorized accessibility to information, improving effective communication between providers, and a better overall experience for patients. The About:Time for Exchange Server – Healthcare Connector module seamlessly integrates with Microsoft Exchange Server to leverage existing enterprise and resource calendars via dynamic, bi-directional availability queries and updates. This ensures that personal and professional calendars are considered in the automated scheduling process, and that the employee Exchange calendars incorporate About:Time for Healthcare appointments.