



ENSURING CONTINUITY OF CARE

A 25-bed rural hospital closed in October 2020 engaging Cariend for ongoing access to medical and business records ensuring continuity of care for the community.

CARIEND[®]

Superior care for your records.



OVERVIEW

SOUTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER (SWGMC) WAS A 25-BED RURAL HOSPITAL BUILT IN 1947 IN CUTHBERT, GEORGIA.

The hospital shared operational space and services with a nursing home and medical clinic. In the summer of 2020, Randolph County Healthcare Authority, the government agency overseeing the hospital, announced the hospital would close in October of that year, while the nursing home would remain open, and the clinic was being sold to a private company. The Healthcare Authority engaged resources from the nearby Phoebe Putney Health System to assist with the wind down of SWGMC.



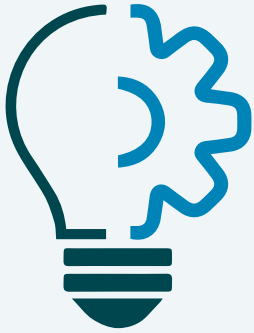
CHALLENGES

AS A 70+ YEAR OLD HEALTHCARE ENTITY, SWGMC HAD RECORDS HOUSED IN MULTIPLE SYSTEMS AND LOCATIONS INCLUDING BOTH PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL, MEDICAL AND NON-MEDICAL, BOXED AND OPENFILE RECORDS.

Since the clinic and nursing home would remain open, the first challenge was to identify and segment the records between the closing hospital and the other two facilities in a way that would be compliant, without disrupting patient care. Prior to the closure of SWGMC, the records were often shared between the facilities, so this issue had to be unwound as all three facilities ended up with different ownership.

The next challenge was to assess the physical records for SWGMC, which were stored in various locations, to determine the overall volume, retention, and transition plan. Additionally, electronic systems housed medical records components, along with the business and employee records for the closing hospital. Radiology records were a combination of film and electronic systems, which were both included in the solution.

One item that is often overlooked when closing a hospital is the non-medical records, as those records are equally important for employees to move on with their careers, as the medical records are to former patients. A conversion plan was developed to extract data from the proprietary medical and business records systems, as the ongoing cost to maintain licensing of these systems was prohibitive. Even if there was no cost to maintain the data in the original, proprietary format, there was risk in accessing the data, as the system vendors could be acquired or discontinue a software product during the 20+ years of retention, so removing the potential risk of access was critical.



SOLUTIONS

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM AT PHOEBE PUTNEY HEALTH SYSTEM MOVED FORWARD TO ENGAGE CARIEND AS THE RECORDS CUSTODIAN.

After considering multiple proposals, the SWGMC wind down team, led by Stacey Barbee, Director of Clinic Operations for Phoebe Putney Health System, chose Cariend to be the custodian of both medical and business records for SWGMC. The project began with a site visit to quantify the records and make a tailored recommendation based on the client's unique situation and needs. The project team hosted weekly calls with key

stakeholders in multiple areas, including radiology, business and human resources, electronic systems, the nursing home, and clinic, to navigate the logistics of multiple systems and physical access to the records. The resulting transition plan enabled Cariend to identify and remove all the physical records within one week after the hospital closed, while the extraction and conversion of the electronic systems also began.



CARIEND UNDERSTANDS THE PRESSURES ON RURAL HOSPITALS AND THEIR SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES, PARTICULARLY DURING TRANSITIONS OF OWNERSHIP OR CLOSURE. WITH OVER 30 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, CARIEND SERVES AS A RECORDS CUSTODIAN ENSURING COMPLIANCE, COST CERTAINTY, AND CONTINUITY OF CARE.



RESULTS

BY WORKING WITH CARIEND, RESIDENTS OF RANDOLPH COUNTY WERE ABLE TO ACCESS THEIR MEDICAL HISTORY FOR ESSENTIAL CONTINUITY OF CARE.

Cariend’s ability to process requests for SWGMC medical records is an important factor for the patients, while the business and employment records are key to helping the former SWGMC employees move on with their careers. Many custodians will not accept business records or native records from various systems. Cariend provided a complete solution with a single provider that could handle both physical and digital records, medical and business records, and the ability to handle various formats including EMR, API and Radiology systems. One of the key components of Cariend’s solution is that patients and providers are not charged for copies of their records. This not only ensures HIPAA compliance, but also expedites the record transfer process for patients. In addition to continuity of care, requests for medical records are processed for a broad range of government and regulatory agencies, including Child Services, Social Security/Disability, and Workers Compensation.



Cariend made the challenging task of dealing with over 20 years of both digital and physical records manageable. Their professionalism and expertise were crucial during the shutdown process. I recommend working with Cariend to any healthcare system or practice faced with records decisions after a closure.



Stacey Barbee,
Director of Business and Clinic Operations
 Phoebe Worth Medical Center and Southwest Georgia Regional Medical Center

CUSTODIAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT For Healthcare

Cariend is a records custodian for healthcare organizations in transition. We remove the burden of records retention and release of information for clients, whether they are closing or simply need to reduce the cost of managing retention and access going forward. Our solution begins with a consultation to discover each client's specific goals.

We customize each project to account for variables such as geography, volume, and record formats. We convert digital record sets into an open-source system to eliminate ongoing costs like software licenses, coordinate the packing and transportation of hardcopy records, then apply and manage clients' retention policies. We provide HIPAA compliant release of information for patients and other stakeholders until retention is met, then securely destroy records at end of life.

That's why hundreds of healthcare organizations and clinics across the country have trusted Cariend as their records custodian, ensuring continuity of care, cost certainty, and compliance.

LEARN MORE ABOUT **CARIEND:**



Your moment begins now. To get started with the closure process, call Cariend today at **855.516.0611** or visit us online at **CARIEND.COM**.

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