

SUCCESS STORY

A Short Take on Success

The Challenge

- ▶ Offset declining reimbursements each year
- ▶ Accommodate steadily increasing volume and expanded test menu without adding additional labor
- ▶ Reevaluate chemistry and immunoassay laboratory instrumentation

The Solution

- ▶ Thorough assessment of chemistry and immunoassay instrumentation and front end automation solution
- ▶ Roche's LEAP configuration, which combines scalable front end automation solutions with the **cobas**® 6000 analyzer series
- ▶ Secure a competitive contract

The Outcome

- ▶ Reallocated labor resources to accommodate new molecular testing resulting in approximately \$80,000 in new revenue
- ▶ Increased efficiency to achieve 20 percent annual laboratory cost savings
- ▶ Improved safety of the work environment for lab technicians

“We wanted to prepare for the future, not just the present. And if the future gives us workforce shortages as predicted, then automation will help us adapt to any increased volumes without the need for additional labor.”

Phil Hansen
Laboratory Manager
Affiliated Community Medical Centers

Laboratory

Multi-Specialty Healthcare Network Achieves 20 Percent Annual Laboratory Cost Savings Through Automation and Integrated Analytics

The Challenge

When it comes to improving healthcare delivery in America today, the issues have never been more daunting, or complex. Like many acute care facilities, Affiliated Community Medical Centers (ACMC) – an 11-clinic network serving more than 240,000 patients throughout West Central and Southwest Minnesota – was faced with the threat of declining reimbursements.

“Trying to offset this decline was concerning, especially during a time when our lab was trying to accommodate steadily increasing volume and expand our test menu,” said Phil Hansen, laboratory manager at ACMC. “I realized I had to decrease expenses through gains in efficiency, which I hoped would translate into labor and other cost savings.”

Fortunately, ACMC was nearing the end of its lease period on its chemistry and immunoassay instrumentation. This created an opportunity for Hansen to reevaluate ACMC’s laboratory equipment and determine the best solution to handle the increase in volumes and achieve the efficiency improvements needed by the department.



The Solution

Wanting to thoroughly assess all available and feasible options, ACMC invited three suppliers to come to its lab for a question and answer session. Next, ACMC narrowed its selection and invited two suppliers to come back to the facility and perform an on-site workload/time study.

“There were many objectives we wanted to accomplish with this study – from reducing errors and improving operational efficiencies, to expanding our lab testing menus and making it easier to manage workload and staffing fluctuations,” said Hansen. “But I knew the information from this study would help us make an informed decision and find the best fit for our needs.”

Roche, the supplier of ACMC’s current chemistry and immunoassay instrumentation, was asked to participate in the on-site workload/time study. Based on simulations from this study, Roche estimated that the ACMC lab had a growth rate potential of 5 to 10 percent per year due to the fact that 50 to 75 specimens per day were sent to other reference labs – potential revenue that could be kept in-house with a new system. In addition, ACMC’s 17-step process to operate the chemistry and immunoassay instrumentation resulted in an average turn-around time of 45 to 60 minutes for test results. Roche predicted that 90 percent of samples could be turned around in 20 minutes with a new 10-step process system.

Based on these results, Roche recommended its LEAP configuration to APMC. The LEAP configuration combines scalable front end automation solutions with the **cobas** 6000 analyzer series to provide a turnkey solution for the mid-volume laboratory.

“The **cobas** 6000 analyzer series is an integrated chemistry and immunoassay system that provides a one tube solution for more than 95 percent of routine laboratory testing,” said Logan Thomas, corporate account director at Roche. “Elements of the front end automation include a centrifuge and decapper. This entry level automation solution allows even small to mid-volume laboratories to benefit from the automation of manual tasks and shows that laboratory automation is not just for the large labs anymore. It is also expandable to accommodate future needs”

After completing the workload/time study, APMC was ready to make a final decision. Based on the findings from both supplier studies, Hansen and his team selected Roche’s solution.

“When we originally went into the selection process, we were not considering automation. We felt that simply combining our chemistry and immunoassay test menus onto one platform would give us the efficiency we were looking for,” said Hansen. “But as we got into the evaluation of the various suppliers, we kept coming back to Roche’s solution for our lab and we realized automation was a way to even greater efficiency.”

The Outcome

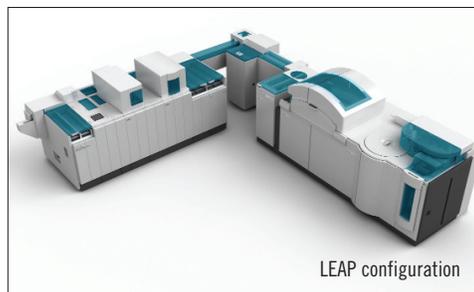
An Amerinet member since 1998, APMC utilized Amerinet’s contract with Roche to purchase the new equipment and achieve approximately 20 percent annual laboratory cost savings.

“We wanted to prepare for the future, not just the present,” said Hansen. “And if the future gives us workforce shortages as predicted, then automation will help us adapt to any increased volumes without the need for additional labor.”

Instead of needing two lab technicians to operate the old instrumentation, the new **cobas** 6000 analyzer series only requires one technician. This enabled Hansen to increase efficiencies and reallocate a technician to accommodate new molecular testing.

“The new molecular testing will bring in approximately \$80,000 in new revenue compared to sending to the reference lab,” said Hansen. “And we are looking into additional tests on the **cobas** 6000, along with several other tests currently sent to reference labs.”

In addition, the **cobas** 6000 analyzer series has improved the safety of the work environment for lab technicians thanks to the decapper module of the automation line. The decapper has significantly reduced repetitive motion concerns, and eliminates the potential bio-hazard splash risk from manual decapping of tubes.



LEAP configuration

“I’ve experienced no pain in my wrist because the new system has eliminated the repetitive motion of manual decapping,” said Kathy Hanson, MLT for APMC. “And learning how to operate the **cobas** 6000 was very easy for us.”

“As a long-term Roche customer, we felt their system and knowledge of our lab operations made them the better fit for our needs,” said Hansen. “And once again, Amerinet has helped APMC become more efficient, reduce our costs and increase our quality of services.”

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Contract Summary

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About Amerinet

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