

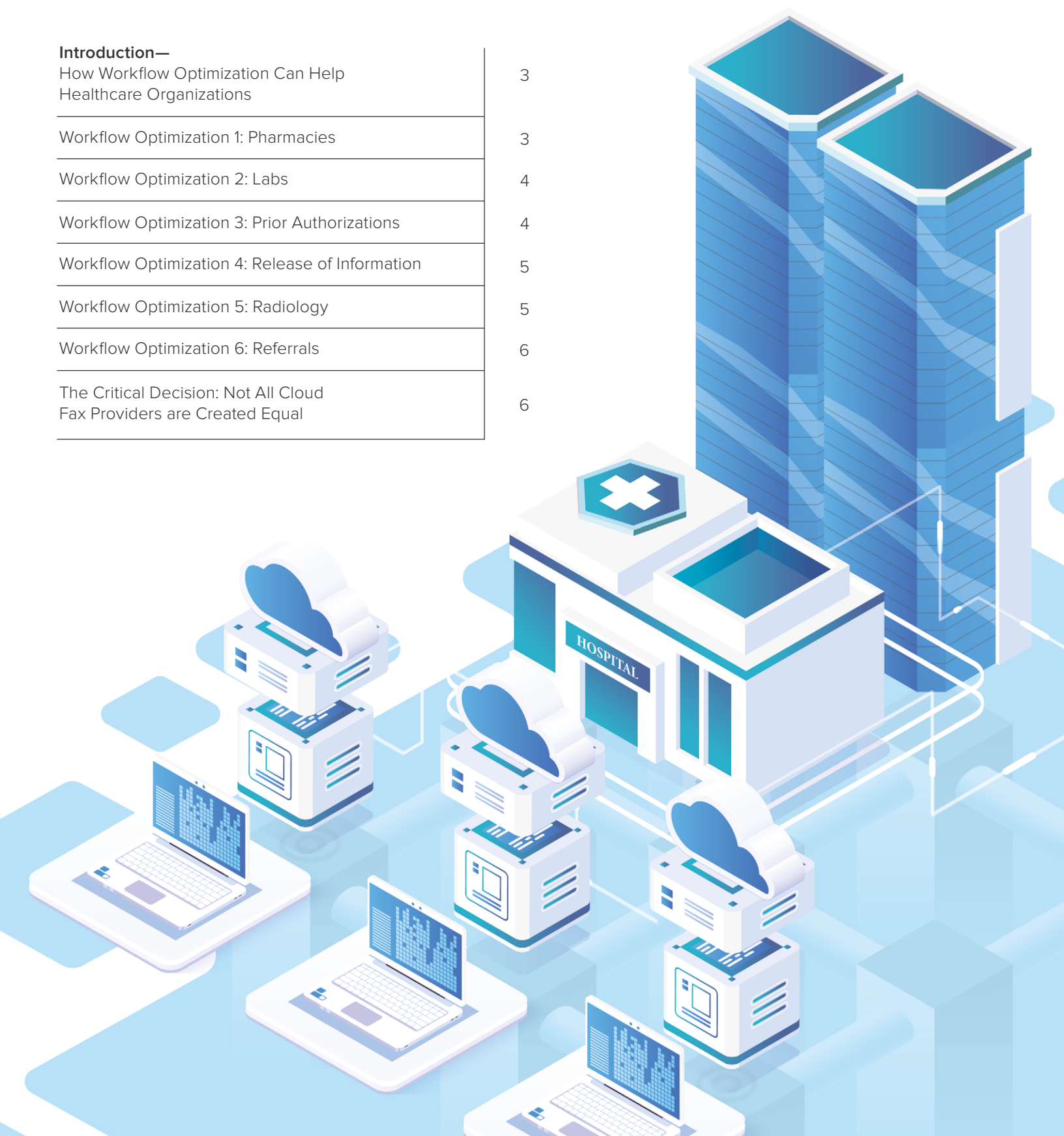
Six Healthcare Workflows

Cloud Faxing Can Optimize



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Introduction: What Workflow Optimization Can Do for Healthcare Professionals and Organizations

Workflow optimization refers to the process of streamlining a business operation or clinical process to make it more time efficient, improve quality, and reduce errors and costs incurred for the particular task. It is also defined as the process of revamping the existing procedure, adding new functions, and bringing employees together with simpler instructions on how to get things completed in an efficient manner.

A workflow, wherever it is executed, is nothing more than a sequence of stages that leads to the realization of a specific objective. These stages normally comprise the definition; execution and automation of the processes that must be carried out to achieve the final goal. From a high-level perspective, it is a sequence where tasks; information or documents are distributed from one member to another, according to a set of rules or procedure.

A company's activities can be divided into processes, which in turn can be split into tasks. These tasks, from the simplest to the most complex, contribute to the achievement of the company's final objectives. This means that the better they are managed, the more successful the business results will be.

Cloud faxing can optimize workflow processes across the healthcare industry and support an organizations' strategy toward digital maturity and interoperability with secure document exchange.

As this paper will demonstrate through several common scenarios, cloud faxing allows healthcare professionals to transmit sensitive information electronically and obtain signoffs from providers quickly and efficiently.

Workflow Optimization 1: Pharmacies

Every pharmacy is trying to accomplish the same things: fill prescriptions accurately and efficiently, provide high-quality patient care, and maintain a sustainable business model in which employees have good job satisfaction and customers are happy. But in reality, pharmacy employees spend the majority of their time addressing insurance issues, physician callbacks, and urgent requests. The tendency for chaos to erupt can be mitigated, however, with an improved workflow.

Cloud faxing plays an essential role between hospitals and pharmacies, as it is a convenient and secure way to transfer prescriptions and other vital documents to either party.

For the most part, laws concerning medications vary by state, but all of them are incredibly stringent when it comes to prescription drugs. In order to keep patients from abusing the system (and abusing drugs), there are very strict rules for faxing. The fax must contain specific patient information and be manually signed by the prescriber. It must be sent over an approved encrypted fax process that doesn't go through a third party, and it must be received by an accredited pharmacy.

Therefore, if a system does not recognize a digital signature, providers and prescribers must be able to quickly fix the situation.

Cloud faxing can help solve this problem with HIPAA secure document exchange.



Workflow Optimization 2: Labs

Lab services are another ancillary service in many health systems whose workflow can be aided by cloud faxing.

Clinical research is important for drug discovery, personalized medicine, and patient-centered care. The workflow in a clinical laboratory is tedious, where employees are tasked with a myriad of responsibilities and safety checks.

A typical workflow initiates with the ordering of tests and specimen collection followed by proper labeling, storage, and testing of the patient specimen. Finally, the results are reviewed by the clinical lab-in-charge and the physician. The entire workflow must be executed in a way to ensure the best patient care, safety, and accuracy of the clinical test data.

Meticulous management is required throughout the clinical laboratory workflow—including the processes for specimen collection, storage, labeling, payments, sending invoices, and reporting clinical results.

Clinical laboratories are a primary source of healthcare data. With the growing complexities in the clinical industry, there is a constant urge for striking a balance between a range of competing operational and financial priorities. Meeting the increasingly rigorous regulatory requirements place additional demands of both time and expertise.

Data inaccessibility further aggravates the problem faced by clinical laboratories by hindering their understanding of the full scope of their resource needs. Consequently, the generation of accurate, reliable, and timely results gets compromised.

Cloud faxing removes data silos to improve clinical laboratory workflow that is essential to effective care coordination. Cloud faxing between disparate lab systems—LabCorp and Quest, for example—will allow timely and cost-effective sharing of clinically relevant information. Moreover, standardizing data formats across departments can also help reduce errors as well as the time and costs associated with managing data variability.

Workflow Optimization 3: Prior Authorizations

Payers and providers agree that automation is the key to reducing the burden of prior authorizations. The challenges include the need for data consistency, lack of standards for attachments, limited integration between clinical and administration systems, lack of vendor products, state requirements for manual intervention, and limited provider awareness.

Payers are inconsistent with how codes are used to communicate prior-authorization status, errors, and next steps, including the need for clinical documentation to prove medical necessity, which is a major barrier to end-to-end automation.

Clinical documentation and other attachments explaining a patient's clinical position help health plans determine medical necessity and appropriateness. Vendors find it difficult to create solutions that support HIPAA's electronic standard for prior authorizations when health plans require different levels of clinical documentation detail on prior-authorization requests.

Interoperability has been a major healthcare challenge. The lack of integration between administrative systems that initiate prior-authorization requests (e.g., practice management systems) and clinical systems containing supporting evidence (e.g., EHRs) creates a barrier to end-to-end automation. Providers have little opportunity to purchase vendor solutions that can automate the prior authorization from end-to-end.

Cloud fax offers foundational interoperability and secure document exchange between systems for prior-authorization information, to support the goals of digital transformation in workflow for prior authorization today.

Workflow Optimization 4: Release of Information

Exchange of health information is an essential function to the provision of high-quality and cost-effective healthcare. The information should be complete and timely for its intended purpose. While this sounds straightforward, often it is not an easy task in the complex medical and legal environment in which the healthcare community operates.

Release of information (ROI) in healthcare is critical to the quality of the continuity of care provided to the patient. It also plays an important role in billing, reporting, research, and other functions. Many laws and regulations govern how, when, what, and to whom protected health information is released.

The HIPAA Privacy Rule contains specific requirements for the management of health information to ensure confidentiality of the individual; the rule attempts to balance the need for prompt and informed delivery of healthcare services with that of protecting the confidentiality of the patient. Complicating these rules further, there are state laws that sometimes bolster—and sometimes seem to conflict with—the federal HIPAA guidelines.

There is no standard, uniform state privacy law in use by all 50 states and the territories. State laws also vary in focus (e.g., HIV or genetic information) as well as degree of strictness or protectiveness of patient privacy. Some states require that additional patient authorization be obtained prior to release, some states do not. This variation in law requires that healthcare organizations develop, implement, and maintain thorough and sometimes unique policies, processes, and procedures around ROI.

Cloud fax provides a HIPAA compliant solution for the needs of a multiple stakeholder/multiple system Release of Information documents workflow with searchable and routable information to ensure safe and quality care coordination and protection of Patient Health Information.

Workflow Optimization 5: Radiology

Imaging centers are targeting both internal and external workflow to gain significant improvement in service delivery and, at the same time, making progress toward the realization of the electronic health record.

Workflow improvements also are proving to decrease operational costs. Advancements include:

- Delivering reports electronically to the referring physician's Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) system to increase customer satisfaction and retention.
- Combining patient, clinical and image data into a consolidated view that enhances the radiologist's read process and improves productivity
- Automating and integrating both coding and billing, thereby increasing reimbursement and decreasing operating costs.

The impact of a modern workflow, when orchestrated properly, quickly results in improved service delivery, greater customer loyalty, the capture of new business, and efficiencies that improve profitability. In the past, radiology workflow has been dictated by its applications. Manual processes were developed to support limited technology and compensate for the gaps between systems. Today, it is becoming more common to design an optimal workflow model and expect technology and supporting applications to accommodate it.

Exchanging information with a referring physician's manual processes are often the limiting factor in turnaround time and delivery of reports. When a paper order is received by an imaging center, it is typically physically processed, often in a staging room. The patient is designated as "new" or "returning" and their demographic information is entered or updated in the appropriate applications. During and after the patient visit, the correlation of patient data, images, and reports is mostly a manual effort, which delays the delivery of the patient report. At the end of the process, a patient report is delivered to the physician who must then manually enter the data into their EMR system,



taking valuable time and creating a higher probability of entry error.

These manual-entry inefficiencies are then passed on throughout each step of the workflow. Fulfilling the requisition for demographic and insurance information, for example, usually requires paper records to be manually retrieved from multiple applications. In terms of man-hours and paper use, the total costs of billing across multiple facilities and organizations can be immense.

Each manual step contributes to a longer turnaround time for reports, resulting in a profound impact on the patient's experience and referring physician and radiologist satisfaction. When paper is the only item connecting a patient/physician with an outpatient imaging center, continuity of care is often limited. The positive impact of automating workflows can be identified in many areas within a radiology practice. Understanding and documenting a workflow will allow the advantage of recent advances in technology that facilitate workflow automation and optimization.

Cloud-fax-integrated digital secure document exchange provide the benefits of (1) enhanced delivery of care (2) increased productivity (3) greater customer satisfaction. Imaging centers offering electronic data exchanges will strengthen their reputation amongst referring physicians and create a foundation able to support an expanding referral community and increased volume of business.

Workflow Optimization 6: Referrals

Many patients receive referrals to different providers and services—including community resources, specialists, labs, emergency departments, and hospitals. When referrals don't get completed or fail to provide the information sought, it upsets patients and frustrates providers.

Referrals can be inefficient, ineffective, and even dangerous unless the process is well coordinated, with all parties communicating and sharing timely information.

Primary care practices must be the hub for all the services their patients receive. This means the practice must be

accountable for ensuring that all referrals meet the time-sensitive needs of the patients and their providers. This requires developing a trusted referral network and staff roles, workflows, and information systems to track and manage referrals. For example, primary care practices need to:

- Support patients by making sure they get the information and care they need. This includes helping them find and schedule services, as well as tracking progress and results.
- Establish relationships with different providers and service organizations in the community to build trust and develop shared expectations for referrals.
- Develop connections with other providers and organizations who care for your patients to facilitate interaction and the timely flow of patient information.

Cloud fax is a dependable secure-document solution that provides the ability to send and receive digital referral information for practices to help patients get the services they need when they need them, and ensure that providers get the information they need when they need it—at the lowest cost to the patient and the health system.

These changes are important steps toward improving patient outcomes while the work becomes more efficient and less stressful.

Not All Cloud Fax Providers Are Created Equal

We'll leave you with one important caveat: Not every cloud-fax service can deliver all of the benefits specific to the healthcare industry that we've discussed throughout this paper.

To ensure your company receives those benefits—and others that are outside the scope of this paper—you'll need to narrow your search to the top providers in the industry.

Here's what to look for in a cloud-fax company:

- **HIPAA compliance**

Obviously, you do not want to sign on with a provider whose cloud fax solution is not going to improve your position with HIPAA and other regulations – or worse, one that could actually increase your risk of noncompliance. So, narrow your research to those businesses that have experience with healthcare customers that have achieved HITRUST CFS® certification, the gold standard for regulatory and security compliance in the healthcare industry.

- **Stability, history, and track record**

Many businesses have gotten into the cloud-fax business in recent years. But those companies don't necessarily have the experience, the infrastructure, or the funding to deliver your organization a world-class cloud-fax service. So, look for companies that have decades of experience in enterprise cloud-faxing—and delighted customers willing to share their success stories with you.

- **Metrics that matter**

Consider only cloud-fax providers that offer hard data about their service—stats and metrics that matter to your company. For example, you should demand a service-level agreement that promises 99.9% uptime, as well as 24/7 live technical support.

When you've investigated the field, we're confident you will come to the same conclusion as thousands of other businesses, including half of the Fortune 500 and many of the largest healthcare organizations in the country.

The most reliable, feature-rich, and secure cloud-fax solutions for health providers today are part of the j2 Cloud Services family of HIPAA-compliant enterprise products:

eFax Corporate

The secure cloud-faxing service trusted by more healthcare organizations than any other—a 21-year expert in securely transmitting ePHI.

The eFax Corporate Checklist

- ✓ Our Solutions are trusted by many of the world's leading business in the most heavily regulated industries.
- ✓ We provide service to nearly half of the Fortune 500 companies worldwide.
- ✓ We service nearly 40% of the ALM Top 200 laws firms—all of which send highly sensitive information by fax.
- ✓ HITRUST Common Security Framework Certified.
- ✓ We sign HIPAA Business Associate Agreements (BAAs).
- ✓ Faxes in transit and at rest are secured with the strongest encryption standards—TLS 1.2 and AES 256-bit, recommended by the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST).
- ✓ eFax Corporate is fully compliant with the payment card industry's PCI-DSS v3.2 2018 encryption requirements.
- ✓ j2 Global owns multiple patents on cloud and fax technology.
- ✓ j2 Global has invested millions of dollars to build a secure, compliant, and redundant global fax network.
- ✓ eFax Corporate's fax network reaches 49 countries.
- ✓ eFax Corporate operates a geographically diverse global network comprising redundant data centers and Tier 3- and Tier 4-rated colocations.
- ✓ SLA for service availability and rapid fax delivery.
- ✓ Live customer support team in the U.S. and Canada.
- ✓ A fully staffed Network Operations Center monitors our network 24/7/365.



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IN THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

eFax Corporate[®], the world's leading enterprise-grade cloud fax solution, is very excited to have achieved the HITRUST CSF[®] certification.

HITRUST CSF[®] certification acknowledges that eFax Corporate[®] utilizes a well-developed and well-recognized framework for regulatory compliance and risk management. The framework is developed in collaboration with information security professionals. It incorporates nationally and internationally accepted standards, including ISO, NIST, PCI, HITECH and HIPAA, to ensure that certified organizations maintain a comprehensive set of security controls.

