Avoid the reimbursement penalty: Go digital.

If you’re thinking about switching from CR to DR imaging technology, you’re not alone.

After the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016, was signed into law, many orthopedic practices took a “wait and see” approach to complying with its stipulation to switch to Digital Radiography (DR). Starting this year, the law cut Medicare payments by 20% for exams performed on analog X-ray systems. In 2018, practices will see another 7% in reductions for exams performed on Computed Radiography (CR) equipment.

This second set of reductions will have a significant impact on practices throughout the country. More than 8,000 CR units were still in service in the US in 2016\(^1\), and all of them must be replaced or imaging facilities will experience payment reductions.

It’s estimated the global digital X-ray market will grow to $11.1 billion by 2021, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13.2%. In the US market, CAGR is estimated at 11% from 2014-2020.\(^2\) While the X-ray market has been dominated by CR X-ray systems, in the face of this new legislation the CR market is on the decline. It decreased by more than 60% in 2016 and KMHA expects that trend to continue throughout 2017, based on industry data.

The “wait and see” period is over. Now is the time to move to DR.

**The benefits of DR**

With the passage of the mandate, orthopedic practices that are using analog and CR technology have the incentive to seamlessly transition to DR for greater efficiency to avoid the financial penalty for not doing so.

Advanced DR technology, such as the **KDR–Advanced U-ARM system**, offers significant benefits to both patients and physicians:

**Efficient workflow and higher patient volumes.** Clinical staff at all levels prefer DR imaging because it makes their work more efficient. Patient exam information can be instantly retrieved, prompting the DR system to move to a predetermined position and source-to-image-receptor distance (SID) to save time when positioning the patient. Pre-programmed positioning and built-in guides help staff make intelligent choices to get quality images, even in challenging views or patient mobility.

According to Guillermo Sander, Sr. Strategic Marketing Manager at Konica Minolta Healthcare Americas, Inc., and a member of the CR/DR group at Medical Imaging & Technology Alliance (MITA), DR can streamline workflow and promote growth in exam volumes. Capturing a radiography exam could decrease from 3 minutes when using CR to 40 seconds when using DR.
Healthcare providers can see more patients, faster, using DR imaging, allowing for higher throughput in imaging centers and practices. More than half of surveyed customers who switched to DR reported 40-60% higher productivity, while nearly 80% increased productivity by 20% after implementing DR. DR also offers greater clarity and diagnostic speed, with the ability to immediately digitally transfer and enhance images to increase a provider’s ability to see more patients overall.

**Better clinical confidence.** DR systems can be preprogrammed to optimize images for patient size, body part etc., eliminating the need to calculate and make adjustments manually. Because DR images are dynamically enhanced and have a significantly higher image quality than CR images, they allow providers to improve their diagnostic ability and overall quality of care—an important consideration in today’s new pay-for-performance reimbursement era.

**Dose efficiency.** DR systems need up to four times less radiation to produce an image of similar contrast to a CR image. Since exams are also faster, a patient’s exposure to ionizing radiation is significantly reduced.

**Lower TCO, higher ROI.** Because a DR system enables healthcare providers to see more patients faster, it helps reduce overall imaging ownership costs. The return on investment (ROI) is also more favorable when you factor in savings in staff and clinician time for processing and reviewing DR images (versus CR), higher patient throughput and potential practice growth, as well as receiving full reimbursement for X-ray services.

**Improved patient satisfaction.** Advanced radiology systems are designed to optimize workflow, increase staff efficiency and improve outcomes, expediting the diagnostic process and ultimately elevating the patient experience. Patients appreciate spending less time at the doctor’s office getting X-rays, as well as the clinical improvements in dose and image quality.
Better decisions, sooner.

What to consider before making the move to DR

There are many important points to consider when deciding to switch to DR.

**Retrofit or new?** Consider your current technology, budgetary constraints and staff capabilities before deciding which is the right choice for your facility.

**Rethink your workflow.** How will this new DR system improve clinical workflow and be optimally integrated into your clinical practice?

Physical space. Consider your space constraints – and possible growth opportunities.

**The right partner.** Look for a vendor who is going to be with you long after the sale, ready to answer questions, service your equipment and train your staff if needed.

"Instant results for surgeons/physicians and unit patients for line placement."

— Jason Smith, Department Manager, Jackson Hospital & Clinic

"It is a lot faster and easier to use than our old system. The image quality is also a whole lot better."

— Edith Olivas, Department Manager, Foothills Medical Center

Better decisions, sooner.
Better decisions, sooner.

82% of surveyed organizations find AeroDR Wireless Panel to be significantly better compared to other vendors.

**Ask the right questions.** To avoid frustration, lost time, and lost revenue when transitioning to a DR system, ask potential vendors questions on their implementation process and beyond.

Learn more about how to make the switch to DR with our blue paper, *Ensuring a Successful Digital Radiography Transition*.

Visit our website to see our full line of DR products for orthopedic practices.

References:

About Konica Minolta Healthcare Americas, Inc.

Konica Minolta Healthcare is a world-class provider and market leader in medical diagnostic imaging and healthcare information technology. With over 75 years of endless innovation, Konica Minolta is globally recognized as a leader providing cutting-edge technologies and comprehensive support aimed at providing real solutions to meet customer’s needs and helping make better decisions sooner. Konica Minolta Healthcare Americas, Inc., headquartered in Wayne, NJ, is a unit of Konica Minolta, Inc. (TSE:4902). For more information on Konica Minolta Healthcare Americas, Inc., please visit [www.konicaminolta.com/medicalusa](http://www.konicaminolta.com/medicalusa).

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<th>Company name</th>
<th>KONICA MINOLTA, INC.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headquarters</td>
<td>JP TOWER, 2-7-2 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Founded</td>
<td>December 1936</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2016 Revenue</td>
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<td>Number of employees</td>
<td>Approx. 43,980 (2017)</td>
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<td>Business Lines</td>
<td>The Konica Minolta Group operates in sectors ranging from business technologies, where our products are typified by MFPs (multi-functional peripherals), and Industrial Business (former Optics Business), where our products include pickup lenses for optical disks, and TAC film, a key material used in LCD panels, to healthcare, where we make digital X-ray diagnostic imaging systems.</td>
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