

After Hurricane Harvey, imaging provider persists thanks to hard work and an assist from teleradiology

By Michael Walter

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Hurricane Harvey, one of the most devastating storms in U.S. history, hit Texas in August 2017, leaving entire neighborhoods underwater and doing billions of dollars in damage. On Friday, August 25, the storm was heading straight for the coastal city of Corpus Christi, Texas, until weather patterns shifted at the last minute.

“The hurricane took a northward pass right before reaching land, so it actually hit the city of Rockport,” says Dennis Wiseman, CEO of Corpus Christi-based Radiology & Imaging of South Texas. “For the most part, it destroyed that area. Very few things are still standing in Rockport.”

Radiology & Imaging’s employees had been bracing for the worst, worried they could lose both of their imaging centers and unsure what the storm would do to the six hospitals they do reads for on a regular basis. Wiseman says they were very fortunate, though Harvey still made an impact on the immediate area.

“We fared much better than what people predicted,” he says. “But we still had a lot of issues with debris and there were power outages all over the city.”

Radiology & Imaging’s two imaging centers both lost power when Harvey hit overnight. Many of the group’s systems were down completely while others remained online thanks to the work of headstrong IT employees and a few backup generators. Both locations were closed Saturday and Monday as a result—add in the fact that each center was closed Friday in



Dennis Wiseman

anticipation of the storm, Wiseman says, and that’s three days of work missed at each site right away. Fortunately, one center was able to open its doors Tuesday, though it still wasn’t back at 100 percent. The group’s other center did not see patients until that Friday.

The Need for a Quick Recovery

The closures obviously had a significant impact on the group’s bottom line, but what worried Wiseman and the physicians most was not being able to read scans for their hospital clients, particularly those coming out of the emergency departments. In the immediate aftermath of Harvey, while Radiology & Imaging was sorting itself out, it needed a solution for providing high-quality, on-time reads to those hospital clients. And that’s when Wiseman sent a 7 a.m. text message

to his representative at vRad, the teleradiology provider that had been providing overnight reads for Radiology & Imaging's hospitals for the last year. The text message was simple and to the point: the company needed additional help, and fast. Could vRad pick up the slack?

"Roman replied to my text right away," Wiseman says. "And less than 90 minutes later, vRad had someone on the system and interpreting cases for our hospital clients."

Wiseman notes that he is not typically one who likes to ask for additional help. He loves his team and he's proud of the work they do on a daily basis. When disaster strikes, though, it can change everything. And Wiseman was thankful that Radiology & Imaging could rely on vRad at such a trying time for the entire region. "We obviously prefer to do the interpretation of scans for ourselves when we can, but working with vRad has been an extremely positive experience for us," he says.

By the end of the weekend, Wiseman's team was able to get back to providing reads for its hospital clients and vRad went back to handling reads during its normal window of 11 p.m. to 8 a.m. Reflecting on the year-long relationship with vRad, Wiseman says the quality has been consistently strong and communication is everything a provider could hope for in a teleradiology partner. "vRad is always very easy to get in contact with when we need them," he says. "And when any issues come up, they find us a fast solution."

The next time any sort of incident affects Radiology & Imaging's ability to provide imaging services to its clients—whether it's another hurricane or a

different kind of emergency altogether, Wiseman knows full-time teleradiology coverage is just a text message away. And as unpredictable as life can be, he says he appreciates having vRad as that always-present relief valve; when there's too much pressure, they can step right up and help.

To learn more about how vRad supports radiology programs with Virtual FTE coverage, [click here](#).