



Anand P. Lalaji, MD (The Radiology Group)

Examine | Teleradiology: A Conversation with . . . Anand P. Lalaji, MD

The role of the subspecialty radiologist

Can a specially trained pair of eyes help improve quality healthcare? A Georgia radiologist thinks so, and his new company has grown 40 percent in the last year based on that platform.

Anand P. Lalaji, MD, president and CEO of The Radiology Group (<http://www.theradiologygroup.com/>), discusses the increasing need for subspecialty coverage in rural hospitals and imaging centers.

The company recently secured contracted agreements with seven additional hospitals to cover full radiology services, some via its Web-based teleradiology system and others when it staffs a full-time radiologist in the hospital.

rt image: How have you seen the demand for subspecialty imaging and readings increase for hospitals and imaging centers?

Anand P. Lalaji: Due to teleradiology and transfer of digital images with ease, the demand has gradually risen to provide subspecialty readings. However, this occurred not as fast as some people in the industry have projected. There are many generalists that use teleradiology, as well, and this skews the model somewhat.

rt image: I understand the Web-based system that you use took two years to fully complete. What were some of the factors you took into consideration in perfecting the Web-based system?

Lalaji: We use a Web-based system that we helped modify and cater to our system of operations. Some factors include: integration with current clients' PACS, speed of image transmission from multiple sites, voice recognition, and report return to the client.

rt image: How have your services been received by rural or remote hospital staffs?

Lalaji: Our experience has been a mixed one. Some rural hospitals are more accepting of this model and way of business because they have been struggling for some time without radiology interpretation.

Typically, when a rural hospital loses a radiologist who has been there for many years, it creates a more difficult model of acceptance.

rt image: How did you select your team of radiologists?

Lalaji: We go through a rigorous process of resume overview, telephone interview, in-person interview, and committee review to approve the candidates. We select fellowship-trained radiologists in our headquarters in Duluth [Ga.], as well as generalists and body imagers for the radiologists on the ground in our hospitals.

rt image: Which subspecialties are you seeing the most need for?

Lalaji: I see the most need for mammography, PET/CT, and musculoskeletal imaging.

rt image: How do you see the emerging trend of teleradiology affecting workflow and patient care?

Lalaji: Teleradiology has affected workflow positively, in my opinion. It has enhanced speed of image interpretation, increased the quality of interpretation, and, therefore, increased the quality of patient care.