

Freiburg University Hospital and Siemens Healthineers reduce COVID-19 infection risk for employees in radiology and drive quality improvements

- **Freiburg University Hospital enables remote scanning assistance for radiology**
- **Safe Scanning Room and home office link**
- **Collaboration to develop remote scanning as a service**
- **COVID-19 becomes a driver of the digital transformation in healthcare**

“Two things are important for us here at Freiburg University Hospital right now: Protecting our professional workforce from infection with COVID-19, and continuing to improve the quality of medicine in the hospital at the same time,” says Professor Frederik Wenz, Chief Medical Director at Freiburg University Hospital. “We therefore just began a very interesting project in our radiology clinic to deal with both challenges simultaneously. This is a perfect example of how we can use the current crisis to advance the digital transformation in healthcare and improve our quality of care.”

Since the end of March, the Department of Diagnostic and Interventional Radiology at Freiburg University Hospital (UKF) has been working with Siemens Healthineers on a joint project in the field of tele-imaging. Medical-technical radiology assistants (MTRAs) can now sit in a separate Safe Scanning Room in the medical center or their home office and scan patients using a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or computed tomography (CT) system in the radiology department. That means they can cut down the frequency of contact with patients potentially infected with COVID-19 and also reduce workplace density.

Remote scanning is possible thanks to the syngo Virtual Cockpit* software from Siemens Healthineers. The medical professionals use this application to access radiology systems via a secure network connection, adjust the MRI and CT settings, and perform the actual scans.

While scanning, they communicate with employees who are with the patient on-site using conference speakers and video, for example.

“Being able to set up workstations for remote scanning in such an incredibly short time was due to our close and excellent collaboration with Freiburg University Hospital,” comments Dr. Wolfgang Heimsch, President Customer Services at Siemens Healthineers. “In addition, we’ve now entered into an innovation partnership agreement under which we’ll develop a new kind of remote support for MRI scans: A remote scanning service that UKF can access from Siemens Healthineers when needed.”

“Once the first stage of crisis preparation was in place, we quickly understood the potential that remote scanning offers,” explains Professor Fabian Bamberg, Medical Director, Department of Diagnostic and Interventional Radiology. “That was how we came to work with Siemens Healthineers to refine our original concept. We believe this will help us deal with a problem many radiology institutions face: How can we ensure and expand the increasing levels of quality and specialization needed in medical care, despite a shortage of qualified professionals in the field?”

Working with Dr. Maximilian Russe, who heads the project at UKF, Professor Bamberg assumes that the remote scanning technology will make it possible to provide live assistance to new employees and also share special professional insights with them more easily. “At the University Hospital we’re able to offer our patients highly specialized examinations, which of course means that we need special knowledge to perform them,” Bamberg observes. “Now employees with less extensive experience can quickly and easily call on more experienced colleagues and receive support.”

Cornelia Walther, Senior MTRA at Freiburg University Hospital, highlights another application: “Right now, remote scanning lets us reduce the number of contacts with potential COVID-19 patients. But I can clearly imagine using this technology, for example, to assign staff to late or night shifts with more flexibility.” Remote scanning services could allow the work of MTRAs to be structured at a more decentralized level. That’s something that UKF and Siemens Healthineers want to investigate and further develop.

Remote scanning services enable radiology clinics and departments to call on remote support from additional MTRAs from Siemens Healthineers, for example. These employees, all with radiology training, will be located at the Siemens Healthineers Remote Service Center (RSC) in Erlangen. They'll access the imaging systems via the Smart Remote Services (SRS) network and from there they can prepare and perform the scans using syngo Virtual Cockpit, depending on the legal regulations applicable in the country. The SRS network is a Siemens Healthineers network infrastructure that's been in place for many years to perform remote services and securely share the data that's required.

"For this innovative service we can draw on our many years of experience in transmitting vital data securely in real time via SRS," Heimsch says. "We're now working closely with UKF to develop the work and workflow processes needed for the remote scanning service. We're planning to include this new development as part of our regular portfolio."

"This joint project with Freiburg University Hospital is a very good example of how we help our customers improve access to first-class patient care and increase productivity at the same time," observes Dr. Bernd Ohnesorge, head of the Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) Region at Siemens Healthineers. "Remote scanning lets the hospital provide top-quality but still affordable care, whenever and wherever the patients need it."

* The product is not yet commercially available in all countries. Due to regulatory reasons its future availability cannot be guaranteed. Please contact your local Siemens Healthineers organization for further details.

This press release and press pictures are available at

<https://www.siemens-healthineers.com/press-room/press-releases/ukfremotescanning.html>

Press pictures of Freiburg University Hospital are available at

<https://www.uniklinik-freiburg.de/presse/pressefotos.html>

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