

When Manual Casefinding Fails at Scale:

An HIM Leader's Experience Improving Oncology Data Completeness

Improving Oncology Data Completeness for Cancer Registry and HIM Operations

Leadership Perspective: Director of Data Integrity & HIM Informatics | Single-facility hospital partnering with a large multi-facility system, Texas
System EHR Environment: Epic

The Challenge

Despite diligent manual review, leadership identified ongoing risk in the casefinding process. Pathology-only workflows and Disease Index reliance made it difficult to confidently assert completeness across the system. Staff time was consumed by searching for cases, limiting capacity for follow-up and quality review.

- Heavy staff time spent searching for cases rather than managing follow-up
- Difficulty meeting accreditation and reporting expectations at scale
- Limited visibility across multiple casefinding sources
- Inability to confidently quantify missed or late-identified reportable cases

Internal analysis confirmed that existing workflows were not sufficient to ensure completeness or scalability.

The Solution

Leadership required a solution that could accurately identify cases across pathology, radiology, and administrative data, apply registry-specific logic, and integrate into Epic without creating parallel workflows. After evaluating the market, the organization selected Inspirata E-Path Plus.

Key solution capabilities included:

- Automated casefinding across Pathology, Radiology, and the Disease Index
- Integration with Epic, supported by multiple structured Epic working sessions
- Centralized platform designed specifically for registry workflows and SEER-based requirements

Prior to adoption, leadership conducted extensive market research and found no other solution that met the full set of registry-specific and casefinding requirements identified.

Measurable Impact

Following implementation, the health system saw a meaningful increase in case identification and operational insight:

- Annual reportable case volume increased from approximately 2,400 cases to over 3,000, representing a 20% increase attributable to improved **casefinding** completeness.
- Casefinding efficiency improved, with faster Disease Index processing allowing staff to complete casefinding earlier and shift appropriate time to follow-up activities.
- Consolidation of multiple data sources into a single workflow improved **confidence** in completeness

While increased casefinding volume expanded abstracting workload, leadership viewed this as validation that prior manual processes had under-identified cases rather than as a system failure.

Epic & Cancer Registry Reality

While Epic is foundational to clinical documentation, registry-specific requirements extend beyond the EHR's native capabilities. Including real-time data support from Inspirata along with a hybrid approach of rules based, AI/NLP and LLM. Epic does not natively support registry-grade reporting and leaves the facility no longer dependent on the EMR.

- Epic does not abstract cases or apply SEER rules
- Epic reporting tools (Clarity, SlicerDicer) are difficult to configure for synoptic and registry needs
- Epic extracts fewer data elements and does not meet registry accreditation requirements

Staffing & Workforce Considerations

Leadership did not view automation as a staffing reduction strategy. Instead, it exposed previously unrecognized volume and enabled more accurate workforce planning.

- Existing staffing included a manager, two casefinding staff, and four abstractors
- Increased case volume required workflow reassessment rather than staffing reduction
- External benchmarks suggest 5–6 abstractors may be required to fully absorb current workload – this site is able to work below that benchmark due to efficiencies from automated case finding and data extraction into the NAACCR form.
- Recruitment constraints and preference for in-house staff reinforced the value of automation

Why it Matters for HIM Leaders

- Automation reveals hidden volume rather than artificially inflating workload
- Accurate casefinding is foundational to accreditation, reporting, and data integrity - this site is happy to report that they now collaborate with their physicians and use of internal dashboards with this data
- HIM teams gain confidence knowing they are no longer relying on best-effort manual detection

Key Takaway

For this small single site facility which operates in a highly competitive area, within complex oncology environments, automated casefinding and data abstraction is essential to ensuring completeness, compliance, and long-term scalability.

Inspirata E-Path Plus enabled this Texas health system to transition from fragmented manual processes to a reliable, registry-focused, automated approach that supports HIM leaders in delivering accurate, and defensible oncology data.

