

## Networking in the Netherlands

# IHE XDS provides important stimuli in network care

As the director of the medical technology department and IT services at the Maasstad Hospital in Rotterdam, Saskia van den Bos has been responsible for four years for the ICT and medical technology as well as all services of the facility. In recent years, she worked intensively to build an infrastructure for the digital exchange of health data. This is a development which, in her opinion, is inevitable for the future design of the Dutch healthcare sector.

“The Dutch healthcare system is among the best in Europe – the quality of care is high. Yet in its current form, it is no longer viable,” van den Bos explains. With a view towards the future, she sees two major challenges in particular: “Our healthcare institutions are confronted with an aging population. We lack the qualified professionals to maintain the current level of care. Simply put: there are too many patients and too little staff. In addition, in the 2018 framework agreement on medical specialist care, it was established that medical hospital care is not being increased further. In the long term, the system will no longer be affordable. We have to find another solution!”

Saskia van den Bos sees approaches to a solution in the provision of the right care at the right place, among others – namely as close to home as possible – as well as in a larger E-Health offering. “For this reason, the digital exchange of health data through a solution such as JiveX from VISUS, which is based on the IHE XDS integration profile (Cross Enterprise Document Sharing) and distributed here in the Netherlands by Alpatron, is also very important. It allows medical specialists to have access anywhere to all relevant data. This need is particularly clear in emergen-

cy care. One of the biggest problems in this area is the fact that there is frequently too little information available about an emergency patient and a large amount of



**Saskia van den Bos**  
Head of the Medical Technology  
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effort is needed to compile the missing data manually. For patient care, this is all far from optimal.”

## IHE XDS: Cross Enterprise Document Sharing

At the Maasstad Hospital, there has been a focus for some time on establishing a digital infrastructure for the exchange of health data. “First of all, we had to get our own digital management in order. We have managed our electronic patient files for several years with JiveX. This solution with an integrated PACS-I and PACS-II forms the basis for our data exchange”,

explains the IT director. Recently, the Maasstad Hospital was connected to the central infrastructure of RijnmondNet via the VISUS XDS solution from Alpatron. RijnmondNet is a regional cooperation organization to promote the electronic communication of healthcare institutions. For the Maasstad Hospital, the XDS solution was a logical step, explains van den Bos. “The XDS solution from VISUS, which Alpatron implemented and maintains, ideally fits our existing digital architecture. Data can be easily transmitted, exchanged, and also automatically imported again in PACS. These processes fit seamlessly into the workflows of our physicians and radiologists.”

## Numerous advantages

The fact that no more CDs are needed to exchange images and findings is, in Saskia van den Bos’ opinion, an enormous advantage for healthcare providers and patients. “If a patient needs to be referred to another specialist physician or be treated in a multidisciplinary way, his or her data are quickly available at all times. In the past, the CDs were sometimes lost in the mail or did not arrive in time. Digital data exchange is far more reliable and also much more secure. The



systems run on secure data servers and Alphatron has established access rights via the so-called Zorg-ID. Each user must therefore log in with his/her UZI ID (a chip card for registered healthcare providers) in order to be able to retrieve data. In the future, it will also be possible to log in with our employee ID. Alphatron developed this access option specifically for us and in doing so, they took our requests into account. We're very happy with this solution – it works perfectly!"

### **Data exchange**

Currently, the Maastad Hospital can exchange digital health data with the Erasmus University Hospital and the IJsselland Hospital. "I hope that the Franciscus Gasthuis & Vlietland, Ikazia, Van Weel-Bethesda hospitals and the Spijkenisse health center can be added soon. In particular, the latter plays an important role in our strategy for network care. As a specialist hospital, we perform complex surgeries. Since we primarily need our facilities for these complicated surgeries, we have to outsource less complex interventions. These are performed by our surgeons at the Spijkenisse health center – and of course to do this, they need all of the relevant data and images. One could

of course simply bring the files over there, but the number of surgeries is increasing – therefore it is even more important for us to be able to quickly, securely and efficiently exchange health data. I hope that we will reach that goal by the end of April!"

### **Nationwide exchange as well**

Along with regional partners, the Maastad Hospital also wants a quick connection to national institutions such as the Albert Schweitzer Hospital and the Leiden University Hospital. "Many patients from these hospitals visit our Anser Prostate Center, where we perform about 500 prostate surgeries annually. We currently exchange patient data and image material via a secure FTP connection. This method demands a significant manual workload and is also very prone to error. This is about to change as quickly as possible. I hope that we can quickly expand JiveX regionally as an IHE XDS solution and supplement PACS-II as an additional function. The solution is a real plus for our hospital and provides important stimuli in the network care for the region. Patients and healthcare providers will benefit equally from this new development," van den Bos confidently states.