On June 28, Skiff Medical Center will take another step toward a “filmless” radiology department when the hospital begins using its new Picture Archiving and Communications System, or PACS.

The PACS system uses computer technology to store diagnostic images such as x-rays, CT-scans, MRI studies, ultrasound exams and nuclear medicine studies. Instead of printing images on expensive black film, the radiology staff will store them digitally on a computer system for instant viewing.

“It’s a huge step forward for us and our patients,” said Radiology Director Jane Maury. “We’ll have better images that are available quicker than ever. And that translates into better patient care.”

Since x-rays were invented more than 100 years ago, radiology technologists have printed their images on bulky, expensive film. These films are difficult to store, easily misplaced and awkward to transport from place to place. To be viewed, they must be placed on wall-mounted light boards.

With PACS, hundreds of images each day will be digitally stored on an optical storage system. Radiologist Paul Groben (or any other authorized physician or staff member) will have immediate access to the images on their computer screens. The images can be digitally manipulated to bring out the most important details of each image.

“The image quality is excellent,” said Maury. “On the computer screen you can adjust the contrast or the lightness any way you want. With film on a viewbox, you can’t do that.”

Groben said he is eagerly anticipating the arrival of PACS, which should make his job of interpreting hundreds of images each day more efficient and organized.

“I can’t wait to get started with it,” he said. “I’ve heard from other radiologists that it makes them a lot more efficient, which would be great.”

Maury said the PACS system has several other advantages:

• No more searching for lost or misfiled films.
• When viewing a current study, physicians also will have access to past studies stored in the PACS system. They will be able to easily monitor the growth of a tumor, for instance, or the the degeneration of a bone or joint.
• Images will be accessible at multiple locations across the hospital. The number of viewing stations will grow over time as the system is fully implemented.
• PACS is tied into Skiff’s new Meditech computer system, and is compatible with every diagnostic device in the Radiology department. The result is a seamless system that links images with demographic data and the patient’s electronic medical record.
• Images can be electronically transmitted to other hospitals and radiologists located anywhere in the world, provided they have proper authorization.

The installation of PACS is the last step in a process that began in late 2002, when Skiff purchase of a computerized radiography system. The system uses digital plates, instead of traditional x-ray film, to capture high quality x-ray images.

PACS will be administered by Melody Wright of Radiology, who has served as the department’s filing clerk. The Radiology staff will begin training on the new system on June 14, with a June 28 “go live” date planned.
Spring graduates

These members of the Skiff Medical Center family recently graduated from high school or college:

- Stephanie Larson, daughter of Dave and Diane Larson, RN, Home Care, graduated from Newton High School. Stephanie was one of the seven valedictorians of her graduating class, having earned a 4.0 grade-point average. She plans to attend Iowa State University to study chemical engineering in the fall.

- Nicole Edwards, daughter of Cathy Fouts and Dr. Patrick Edwards, graduated from Loras College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English/Creative Writing.

- Brian Ruggle, son of Dr. Paul and Diane Ruggle, graduated from Newton High School. He will study at Drake University with a Biology major and Music minor.

- Joe and Tom Bartello, sons of Jill and John Bartello, Facilities Management, graduated from Newton High School. Joe will attend Iowa State University; Tom will attend Northwestern College in Orange City.

- Becky Bartello, daughter of Jill and John Bartello, Facilities Management, graduated cum laude (with honors) from Pace University in Pleasantville New York, with a degree in Business Marketing and Communications.

- Brook Maher, son of Mike and Kelli Maher, Home Care, graduated from Prairie City-Monroe High School. He plans to attend Kirkwood Community College in the fall to study Radiology.

- Lindsay Bishop, daughter of Tom and Joy Bishop, Home Care, graduated from Baxter High School. She plans to attend Simpson College in Indianola, majoring in Pre-Medicine.

- Elizabeth (Libby) Maury, daughter of Jane Maury, Radiology, will graduate from Grinnell High School on May 30. She plans to attend the new Mortuary Science school at Des Moines Area Community College.

- Catherine Lahart, daughter of Willie Lahart, Respiratory Care, graduated from Newton High School. She plans to attend Truman State University in the fall.

- Bryan Goos, son of Dave and Jayne Appleby, RN, graduated from Newton High School. She plans to attend the University of Northern Iowa and major in Biology.

- Brandon Milligan, son of Mark and Christie Milligan, RN, graduated from Wartburg College on May 23, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Religion, with an emphasis in youth and family ministry. After getting married in July, she will move to Dillon, Montana, to work as a youth pastor in a church.

- Ward Blanton, son-in-law of Larry and Patty Wade, CNA, graduated from Wartburg College on May 23, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Religion, with an emphasis in youth and family ministry. After getting married in July, she will move to Dillon, Montana, to work as a youth pastor in a church.

Welcome back

- To Ken Meyer, Facilities Management, who is returning to work part-time on weekends (and vacation fill-in). He retired in late 2003 after 14 years of service at Skiff Medical Center.

- To Barb Dunlavy, RN, on the death of her mother.

- To Mary Henning, on the retirement of her mother.

- To Mary Henning, CNA, on her retirement.

Education Offerings

Contact Lisa Gulberg, RN, of Education Services at ext. 4871 to learn more about these educational opportunities:

- Trauma Nurse Core Course, June 14 and 15 from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Inservice Room A. This is open to all staff who would like to attend. Mandatory for ER/SCU nursing staff.

- Iowa Donor Network presentation, June 24 from noon to 1 p.m., Inservice Room A. Presented by Meg Morris of the Iowa Donor Network.

- Nurse Competency Make-Up Session- June 21, starting at 8 a.m. in the Inservice Room.
Best wishes...

• To Colleen Messick, Human Resources, who retired May 21 after 34 years of service to Skiff Medical Center.
• To Nancy Mott, CST, Operating Room, who retired May 21 after 28 years of service to Skiff Medical Center.

Relay for Life teams being formed

Three Skiff Medical Center teams are being formed for the June 19 Relay for Life event at H.A. Lynn stadium. If you are interested in contributing to or taking part in this fund-raiser for the American Cancer Society, contact any of these team captains:

• Kaye Swarts (the Hospice team is called “Walking Wings”).
• Carol Hopkey (the Pink Ribbon Support Group team is called “Hope and Glory”).
• Donna Combs (the Specialities Clinic team is called “The Closer to Home Folks”).

Hopkey is taking orders for luminaries, to be lit at dusk during the event. To order a luminary (suggested donation is $5), contact her at ext. 4307.

Physician Assistant Bill Martin joins Skiff Occupational Medicine staff

Physician Assistant Bill Martin, PA-C, has joined the Occupational Medicine staff of Skiff Medical Center.

Martin will begin working at Skiff on June 1. He will join a staff that includes Christie Milligan, RN, and Tamera Humes, RN. When construction work on the first floor of the 1922 building is complete, their offices will be re-located near Human Resources.

Martin’s goal is to help Skiff further develop its occupational medicine service. The service helps local companies provide cost-effective, high quality health care for their employees who are injured at work.

“I think we can be a real resource for both employers and their employees,” said Martin. “We can help them get consistent, quality care so they can go back to work safely and as quickly as is practical, and we can be the one place they can go with their needs or questions.”

In the past, Occupational Medicine services were available at Skiff on a limited basis. Now with the arrival of Martin, working in conjunction with

June 5 fishing derby will support new Hospice Wing

A fishing derby to support Hospice of Jasper County will be held on Saturday, June 5, at Rock Creek Lake.

The derby will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with check-in beginning at 9 a.m. at the Beach Area Boat Ramp. Participants are not required to have fishing licenses, because the derby is being held on the state of Iowa’s free fishing day.

“It’ll be a real family-friendly day, and it’s for a great cause,” said Skiff’s Bob Peters. “We’re hoping we can get a lot of people to help out our new Hospice wing.”

Volunteers are needed to work the event as well. Each Skiff employee who volunteers will earn 10 Skiff Rewards Points.

Prizes will be awarded in several age groups, including 0-8 years old, 9-16 years old and 17 and over. Entry fees will be $7 per person, or $15 per family or $25 per boat. Team prizes will also be awarded to those fishing together from boats.

The proceeds from the fishing derby will go to support the Monarch Wing at Skiff Medical Center. The new residential hospice facility, located on the third floor of Skiff Medical Center in Newton, opened officially on May 20.

Rock Creek Lake is located at Rock Creek State Park, 3 miles north and 3 miles east of Kellogg.

For more information on the fishing derby, contact Peters at 791-4832.
Questions and answers about HIPAA

By Janice Balmer, RHIA

The following questions and answers are taken from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) FAQ section of their website. You can access this website by going into Skiff Medical Center's intranet and clicking the HIPAA button. This will take you to Frequently Asked Questions. When you get to the next page, click on Frequently Asked Questions for Privacy and Security.

**Question:** Is a hospital permitted to contact another hospital or health care facility, such as a nursing home, to which a patient will be transferred for continued care, without the patient's authorization?

**Answer:** Yes. The HIPAA Privacy Rule permits a health care provider to disclose protected health information about an individual, without the individual's authorization, to another health care provider for that provider's treatment or payment purposes, as well as to another covered entity for certain health care operations of that entity.

**Question:** A provider might have a patient's medical record that contains older portions of a medical record that were created by another previous provider. Will the HIPAA Privacy Rule permit a provider who is a covered entity to disclose a complete medical record even though portions of the record were created by other providers?

**Answer:** Yes, the Privacy Rule permits a provider who is a covered entity to disclose a complete medical record including portions that were created by another provider, assuming that the disclosure is for a purpose permitted by the Privacy Rule, such as treatment.

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**Question:** What is the purpose of the HIPAA Security Standards rule and why were security standards needed?

**Answer:** The purpose of the Security Standards rule is to adopt national standards for safeguards to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of electronic protected health information. They were needed because there were no standard measures existing in the health care industry that addressed all aspects of the security of electronic protected health information while it is in use, in storage, or during the exchange of that information between entities. HIPAA mandated security standards to protect an individual’s health information, while permitting the appropriate access and use of that information by health care providers, clearing houses, and health plans.

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**Nominations sought for Caregiver of the Year**

Do you know a Skiff Medical Center CNA who deserves to be named Caregiver of the Year? If so, please nominate them by 3 p.m. on Tuesday, June 8. Just write down your thoughts on how your nominee fulfills Skiff’s mission of providing compassionate, personalized care for the people of Newton and Jasper County.

Nominations should be placed in Patti Hayes' mailbox, or sent to her by e-mail.

The award will be announced in time for the June 10 issue of VITAL SIGNS.

**Hammer grandbaby**

Congratulations to Jerry and Carol Hammer, RN, on the birth of their granddaughter. Jaide Josephine Kueter was born to Jessica and Jeff Kueter in Toledo, Ohio on May 5. Jaide weighed 8 pounds, 4 ounces, and was 22-1/4 inches long.

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**Skiff birthdays**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bret Vos</td>
<td>May 29</td>
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<td>Molly Thompson</td>
<td>May 30</td>
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<td>Sue Wolters</td>
<td>June 1</td>
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<td>Betty Valentine</td>
<td>June 1</td>
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<td>Melissa Engle</td>
<td>June 2</td>
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<td>Barb Mullins</td>
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<td>Judy Williams</td>
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<td>Margaret Clingman</td>
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<td>Loretta Bowman</td>
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<td>Glenna Patterson</td>
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<td>Irma Woody</td>
<td>June 13</td>
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<td>Lisa Schoborg</td>
<td>June 14</td>
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Senior Health & Fitness Day
Skiff Medical Center was well represented at Wednesday’s Senior Health and Fitness Day, held at the Newton Mall. Several Skiff services, including Women’s Health, Wellness, Assisted Living, Massage Therapy, Physical Therapy, Diabetes Education, Laboratory, Hospice of Jasper County and Cardiac Rehabilitation, were represented at the event.

Monarch Wing now open for Hospice patients; open house draws a crowd of 700+
Just hours after opening on May 20, the Monarch Wing at Skiff Medical Center admitted its first Hospice patient. Within a few days, three patients had been admitted into the residential hospice facility. “The families we’ve had have really loved the unit,” said Hospice Director Carolyn Sullivan, RN. “One of them told me that it was just like home, only nicer. They feel very comfortable here.”
Two of the three patients admitted to the Monarch Wing returned home within a few days, after becoming medically more stable. The third died, surrounded by family and friends. “It’s just a wonderful, peaceful place for our patients and families to be,” said Sullivan.

More than 700 visitors attended the May 16 open house on the Monarch Wing.
Many who attended the three-hour event had contributed financially to make the Monarch Wing possible. In all, 818 individuals and businesses donated more than $1 million for the Monarch Wing. Thanks to everyone who volunteered their time or worked extra hours to help during the open house. This includes the Hospice staff, Nutrition Services staff, Hospice volunteers, Skiff Ambassadors.

Plaques honor donations by Skiff employees, physicians
Two brass plaques commemorating the financial support of Skiff Medical Center employees and physicians are now on display in the new Monarch Wing. The employee plaque contains more than 300 names; the physician plaque contains 30 names.

Hospital Week T-shirts still available
If you didn’t get a black Hospital Week t-shirt, there are still some left in the Public Relations office. Shirts are available in sizes small through XXXXL. Cost: $8 for your first shirt, $10 for each additional shirt. Contact John Easley at ext. 4339 if you would like to purchase a shirt.