

# Orange County Health Care Agency

California

Cognition

Forms Processing Solution



Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) processes hundreds of thousands of forms annually for programs serving the general public, special need populations, business and industry, government entities, and community-based service providers. With Cognition forms processing software, HCA has increased data accuracy, efficiency and productivity — as well as its capacity to take on new projects and improve services.

## Challenge

- The need to process hundreds of thousands of forms annually
- Numerous service areas and programs
- Needed to expand capabilities to include OCR and to capture handwritten text

HCA is composed of public health, behavioral health, medical and institutional health, regulatory health, and financial and administrative services. Its mission is to protect and promote the optimal health of individuals, families and the county's diverse communities.

HCA previously used an Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) software solution to meet its forms processing needs. The agency now decided to take its technology to the next level.

“We wanted to expand our capabilities and go beyond bubble reading to do Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and capture handwritten text,” said Curtis J. Condon, Ph.D., planning and research manager for HCA's Office of Quality Management. “We researched different systems and found Cognition best met our needs.”

## Solution

- Streamline data collection across service areas
- Digitize forms and store images in a variety of formats
- Export data into database or statistical software program for analysis
- Quickly process data on hundreds of thousands or millions of people

HCA implemented Cognition to streamline data collection across its service areas. Cognition allows the agency to collect information on paper forms and then transform those images into useable, actionable data.

Cognition provides HCA with the flexibility to create its own machine-readable forms or to order preprinted forms to fulfill specialized needs, such as serialized numbering or peel-off labels. When the paper forms are completed, HCA uses Cognition to digitize the forms and store the images in a variety of formats.

“Every day we process hundreds, if not thousands, of forms. Each service area has several programs, some of which have multiple forms,” said Dr. Condon. “Cognition allows us to quickly and accurately process data across a multitude of programs.”



For example, in the Public Health Services area, HCA has an influenza vaccination program that collects demographic and health risk data for all flu vaccine recipients. This program processes approximately 30,000 forms annually.

In Behavioral Health Services, all eligible county residents seeking mental health care must complete a psychosocial assessment. At 90 days, clients are reassessed. With 15,000 to 20,000 clients a year, the program processes tens of thousands of assessments annually.

“Those are just a few of the many ways we use Cognition,” said Dr. Condon. “Once we go through all the stages of forms processing — design and deployment, scanning, identification, recognition and verification — we export the data into a database or statistical software program for analysis. From there, we can write reports and create charts or graphs to provide staff with the data to manage our programs and for state or county reporting. Cognition helps policy makers make data-driven decisions.”

HCA plans to use Cognition for a countywide survey of all pregnant women about alcohol, tobacco and drug use.

“We hope to identify the current prevalence of use,” said Dr. Condon. “We’ll be able to identify, for instance, if there are high rates of methamphetamine use in one or more parts of the county. With that data, we can then dedicate resources for education,

prevention, outreach and treatment to parts of the county that might be underserved.”

In addition to collecting data to improve services, Cognition helps HCA plan for the unexpected. HCA’s Health Disaster Management division prepares the county and local medical providers to mitigate, respond to and recover from natural and man-made disasters.

“If there’s an event where we have to vaccinate many people, whether it’s 100,000 people or the entire county, the plan is to quickly generate a machine readable document that can be filled out by anyone receiving a vaccination, so we can track their information and follow up later,” he said. “With Cognition, we have a system in place to quickly process data on hundreds of thousands or millions of people, so we don’t have to manually key it in.”

## Results

With Cognition, HCA has streamlined forms processing and enhanced data access, resulting in improved productivity and data integrity.

“We set up our system to distribute Cognition at each workstation, which allows more clerical staff to be involved in processing. This way, they can scan a batch of forms and then go back to their regular workstation to work on data verification and corrections when they have time,” said Dr. Condon. “This distributes the workload and increases productivity because we can

have verification going on simultaneously at multiple workstations.”

Cognition has increased data accuracy as well. “Because forms processing is easier, clerical staff have less fatigue from data entry so they can focus more on correcting questionable information,” he said.

With Cognition, HCA reports improved efficiency across its many service areas. “Cognition has greatly increased our capacity and our ability to take on a whole new set of projects,” said Dr. Condon.



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Curtis J. Condon, Ph.D.  
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Please visit us at [www.scantron.com](http://www.scantron.com) for a complete overview of Cognition’s system requirements or call us at (800) 722-6876 for more information.

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