



## First Med Inc.

Taking paper out of monthly billing runs



First Med began in 1988 as a small, family owned ambulance company on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, performing about 500 transports per year. Today, as the largest private ambulance group in the Southeast, the First Med family of companies transports over 100,000 patients per year and has over 300 employees. First Med operations include three companies in Wilmington North Carolina, Hampton Virginia and Portsmouth Virginia, each with satellite offices.

### Challenge: Manual processing of mail

First Med prints 5,000 patient statement pages per month from its EMS Consultants billing software. Each month an employee would spend 2 weeks going through them one by one, checking the paper statements against the software. Then another employee would fold and stuff them into envelopes, and hand them off to a mail clerk. These employees have other responsibilities, including checking accounts and answering customer calls.

"We wanted to cut down on the turnaround time from when the statements were printed to when they actually got mailed," said Matt Ellis, Accounts Receivable Manager at First Med. "We also wanted to get rid of having to fold and stuff all the envelopes, which is just mundane work."

### Solution: Esker on Demand

After looking into mail processing equipment, Ellis determined this would not cut costs. He found that other mailing services could not do what he needed them to do. Ultimately, a web search led him to Esker on Demand.

Esker worked with Ellis to enable direct upload from First Med's billing software to the Esker on Demand platform. "It immediately goes right into the Esker system," said Ellis. "We just select the Esker printer and it opens up a web page. We log in and it works as if it was made for our system."

Once the statements are uploaded, First Med employees can review them and cancel any ones they do not want to be mailed. The Document Manager interface of the Esker solution provides tracking capabilities for visibility into the process. The Esker solution can also find missing address information to help prevent returned mail. "It can pick up a lot of the little things that can be easily overlooked," said Ellis. "That helps us get statements out right the first time."

### Benefits

Especially valuable to Ellis is how the Esker solution simply automated First Med's mailing process without disrupting it. "Esker on Demand allows us to do the same process we were doing but save the time and cost of the manual work," said Ellis. "We can view each statement and accept or reject on an individual basis. We're not restricted to mailing the entire batch. So the process of going through each account is still there, but it's workable with the Esker solution the way we want to do it. The nice thing is that Esker on Demand saves us the time and the effort of folding all the statements, stuffing the envelopes and putting them through the mail system. That's one of the biggest benefits. It takes about one week to review the invoices now."

"I like the fact that if somebody says 'I haven't been getting the bill' or if the person printing the statements says 'it's not printing,' I can go in and see if that statement printed or if that one was actually accepted or rejected and verify the address," added Ellis.

Ellis also has been able to assign employees to more productive work instead of spending all day on manual tasks like stuffing envelopes. "Getting away from the paper is a tremendous help for me in this office," he said. "Plus, we save on postage since employees are no longer weighing envelopes by hand, and we don't have to carry anything to the post office. It's all taken care of."

**We don't need another software. We simply upload straight from our system and everything's right there. I appreciate how Esker was able to do that for us when other companies wouldn't.**

Matt Ellis ■ AR Manager ■ First Med Inc.

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