

## Case Study: Hello Rounds



**A Milwaukee radiologist greets and converses with patients to make them feel more at ease.**

By Chelsea Krieg

### Key Takeaways:

- For several years, radiologist Ian A. Weissman, DO, FACR, has conducted “Hello Rounds” to greet patients awaiting treatment at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center.
- Inspiration to conduct these rounds came from time spent learning from innovative leadership practices discussed at the [Radiology Leadership Institute](#) (RLI).
- The rounds increase radiologists’ visibility to both patients and clinical staff, emphasizing a team approach to patient care.

**Editor’s note:** This case study is part of a series called *Imaging 3.0 NOW*. Case studies in this series highlight straightforward initiatives that radiology practices can implement immediately to jumpstart or advance their *Imaging 3.0* efforts.

On a recent busy day in the Milwaukee VA Medical Center’s radiology department, radiologist Ian A. Weissman, DO, FACR, emerged from the reading room to find four patients on stretchers in the hallway, awaiting care.

While it is not uncommon to find patients waiting just outside of the reading room, four was a particularly high number at once. Still, Weissman was not discouraged from greeting each patient with a smile and a “hello.” Instantly, the patients lit up, and both Weissman and the patients were in happier moods, with Weissman even feeling a renewed sense of purpose.

### Thinking Differently

Weissman has been conducting these “Hello Rounds” in his department for several years. During the rounds, he leaves his reading room and says hello to each radiology patient he encounters. If the patient wants to engage in conversation, Weissman usually exchanges pleasantries or asks if the patient needs anything. When patients learn he is a radiologist, some are surprised while others are unfamiliar with who radiologists are entirely. This interaction gives Weissman the opportunity to provide more information about radiological care and to demystify the role that radiologists play in patient care.

Weissman conducts these rounds five-eight times a day, with each encounter lasting just a few minutes and taking very little time away from his traditional work. The rounds are informal, so Weissman doesn’t document the names of the patients he talks with or track them in any way. He does it simply to put patients at ease and to let them know that someone cares.

“Most people assume that these patients are being taken care of, and walk past them like they’re fixtures in the hallway,” Weissman says. “Nothing is lonelier or scarier than being on the stretcher in a hospital, waiting for something to happen. Just acknowledging these patients can reduce their anxiety.”



Ian A. Weissman, DO, FACR, staff radiologist at Milwaukee VA Medical Center, implemented “Hello Rounds” in his department. During these rounds, he greets patients who are awaiting radiology treatment, helping them feel more at ease.

### Getting Inspired

Weissman’s involvement in the ACR’s [Radiology Leadership Institute](#) (RLI), a professional training program specifically designed for radiologists, motivated him to begin conducting these rounds. “At RLI, leaders share ideas about how to improve our profession,” Weissman says. “I am consistently impressed with their innovative approaches to care, so I adapt those approaches to my own practice.”

At one RLI event, ACR Board of Chancellors Chair Geraldine B. McGinty, MD, MBA, FACR, inspired Weissman to begin connecting with patients. “Dr. McGinty stressed the importance of arriving to work through the front entrance, not the back,” Weissman says. “The idea is to encourage radiologists to see and engage with patients. I thought, ‘Wow, yeah. That makes a lot of sense. I think I can positively impact patient care by doing that.’ So, I began to walk into work through the waiting room and started engaging with patients as soon as I arrived at work.”

But Weissman wanted to do more. Sabiha Raoof, MD, chair of radiology at Jamaica Hospital Medical Center

ACR  
1891 Preston White Drive  
Reston, VA 20191  
703-648-8900  
[www.acr.org/Imaging3](http://www.acr.org/Imaging3)

©Copyright 2018  
American College of Radiology

Media contact: [pr@acr.org](mailto:pr@acr.org)

*Continued on next page*

## Case Study: Hello Rounds



Continued from previous page



Catherine Giannese, registered radiology technologist at Milwaukee VA Medical Center, has witnessed "Hello Rounds" and emphasizes the significant impact they have on both patient and clinical staff morale.

and Flushing Hospital Medical Center in Queens, N.Y., was particularly influential in his next steps. Following her own breast cancer diagnosis and treatment, Raoof began conducting "Make a Difference (MAD) Rounds" at her hospital. (Learn more in [this Imaging 3.0 case study](#)). During these encounters, Raoof visited patients in their rooms and asked if they needed anything. This program has since evolved to include several teams of individuals who perform these rounds.

After hearing Raoof discuss MAD rounds at an RLI event, Weissman adapted her concept to the radiology halls of his own medical center, asking the patients he sees whether they need anything — perhaps a warm blanket or an extra pillow.

### Benefiting Patients

While Weissman was eager to interact with patients in this way, he was initially hesitant. "I wasn't sure how the patients would receive me," Weissman says. "I made this assumption that sick patients might not want to speak with me, and maybe I should leave them alone. However, that has never been the case."

Once Weissman started making the rounds, he immediately saw how even this small interaction could have a big impact on the patient experience. "Acknowledging these patients brings them back into the moment and makes them feel better," he says. "This is something anyone can do to show patients that we care about them."

Catherine Giannese, a registered radiology technologist at Milwaukee VA Medical Center, has observed these rounds and the positive impact they have on patients.

"Inpatients especially feel like they go unnoticed as they await care because many doctors lose the patient care focus and think only about the patient's procedure or treatment," she says. "Dr. Weissman's rounds make patients feel like they are still people despite being ill, on a stretcher, and under a pile of blankets."

### Connecting the Team

Patients aren't the only ones who benefit from the rounds; Weissman also gets a lot out of the encounters, especially on frustrating or exhausting workdays. "On busy or challenging days, these rounds might take more effort, but I never skip them," Weissman says. "When I get that positive feedback from patients, it perks me up a bit. The benefits are a two-way street."

What's more, the rounds allow other staff members to connect more closely with the radiologists and better understand radiology's role on the care team. "When we don't see the doctors interacting with the patients, it can feel like they are disconnected from the care process," Giannese explains. "These rounds emphasize how each person on our team is equally important to the care process and make it clear that we are all here for the same purpose — to help patients."

Weissman encourages radiologists to modify his "Hello Rounds" to meet the needs of their individual workdays and practices and to consider how much it can mean to patients. "I don't think patients value a fancy lobby with waterfalls," Weissman says. "What they value is being treated like family members. Saying hello seems like a small gesture, but it can have a big impact."

### Next Steps

- Begin shifts by arriving through the front door and engaging with patients on the way into work.
- Greet patients with a smile and a "hello," and make a point to interact with patients in waiting areas.
- Make patients feel more at ease in treatment areas. Ask if they would like a blanket, or simply engage them in conversation.

### Share Your Story

Have a case study idea you'd like to share with the radiology community? To submit your idea, [please click here](#).



Hello Rounds by American College of Radiology is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Based on a work at [www.acr.org/imaging3](http://www.acr.org/imaging3). Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at [www.acr.org/Legal](http://www.acr.org/Legal).

ACR  
1891 Preston White Drive  
Reston, VA 20191  
703-648-8900  
[www.acr.org/Imaging3](http://www.acr.org/Imaging3)

©Copyright 2018  
American College of Radiology

Media contact: [pr@acr.org](mailto:pr@acr.org)