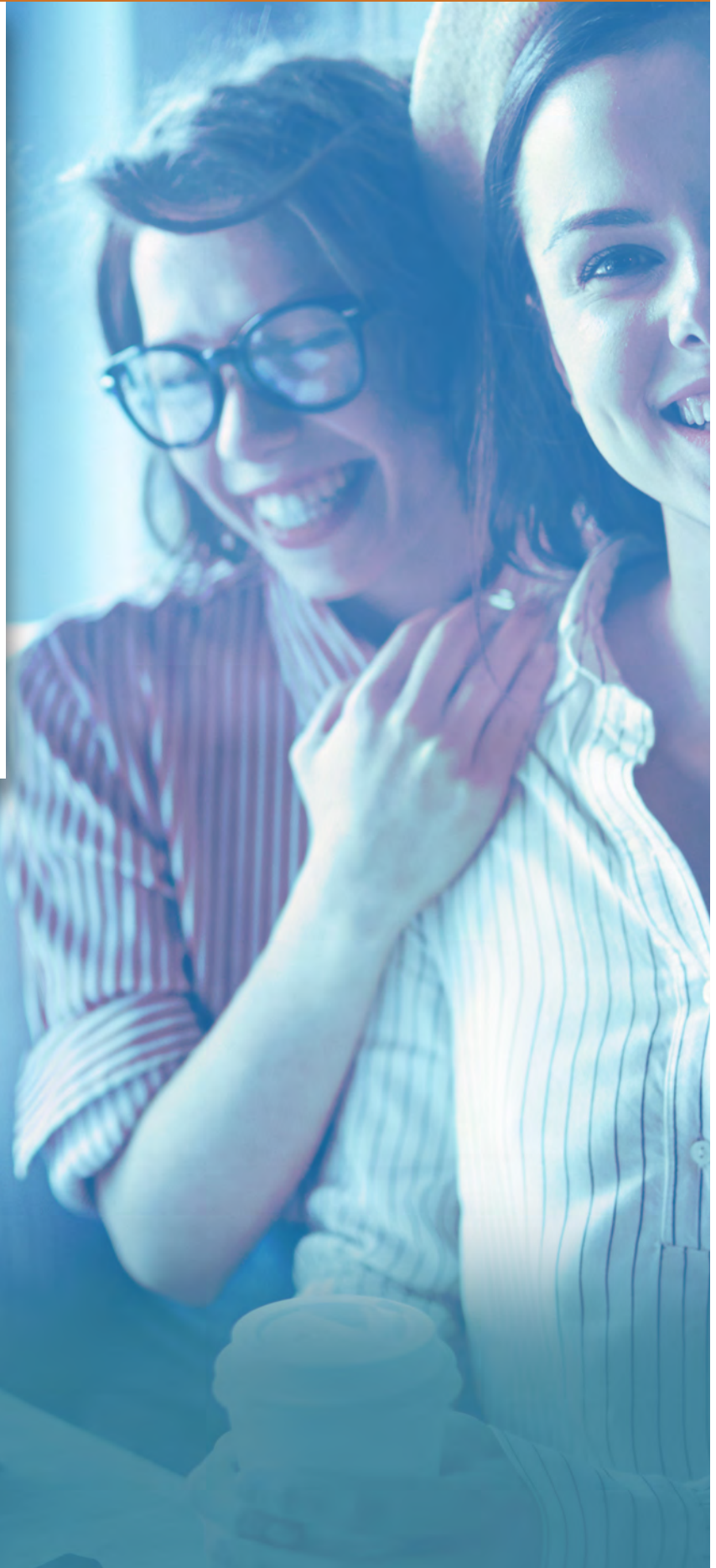


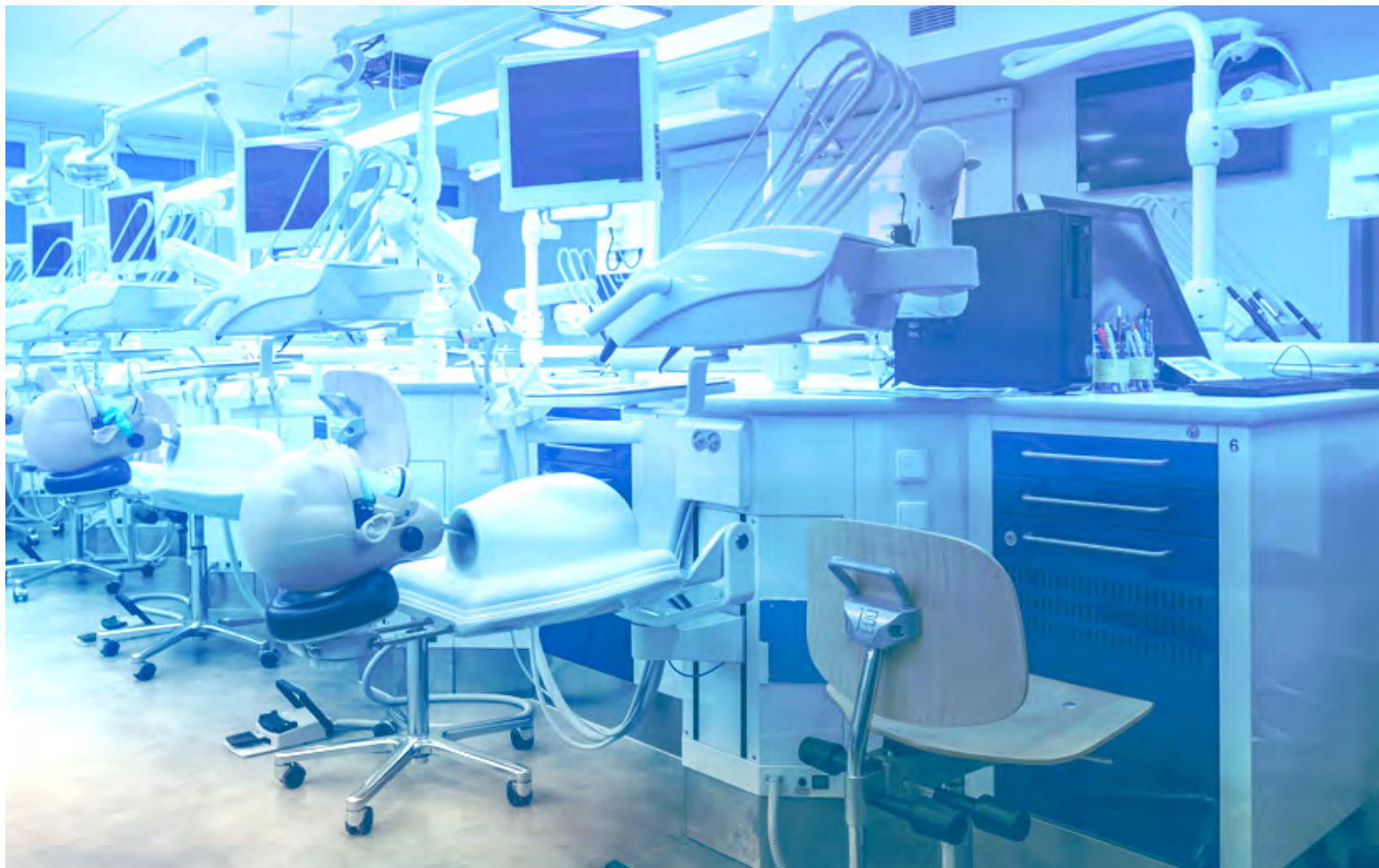
## Dental School Replaces Problematic Signature Pads

### **Boosts IT and User Efficiency**

East Carolina University's  
School of Dental Medicine's  
success story, prepared by  
Scriptel Corporation



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Between patient registrations, treatment-plan sign offs, payments, and patient check-outs, a lot of signatures are required at East Carolina University's School of Dental Medicine. So you can imagine how Phillip Allen, Director of Informatics and Tech Services, felt when his team was sending five or more signature pads out for repair each week. And then there was the time they lost electronic signing capabilities altogether—for a year—while two software companies and the signature pad manufacturer blamed each other for the outage.

In addition to hardware issues like inconvenient watch-batteries used in the pens and a weak connection between the USB cord and the unit that caused breakage, there were software and support issues. The school has a 188,000 square-foot teaching facility in Greenville, NC and eight regional satellite offices. It runs axiUm's EHR in a Citrix environment, and the signature pads it purchased in 2010 didn't work well with Citrix.

Allen explains that setting up a pad required a technician to plug it into a blade server in the main data center. Once on the clinical unit, the pads had to be unplugged and plugged back in to work if they had been left plugged in overnight. Additionally, if you unplugged a unit while in an axiUm session, the system wouldn't recognize a new pad (or the same one) until you logged out, plugged in the unit, and logged back in.

The electronic signature system was unwieldy and getting a signature pad was a competition. There were only a limited number, and they had to be signed out by students to obtain patient signatures on treatment plans. Some students became so frustrated they began stashing a signature pad in their laptop bag in the hopes that using the same device would allow easier hardware recognition (it didn't). This led to a shortage of devices available to be signed out and caused Allen and his team to seek a new solution.





## Fully supported, durable, plug and play

Today, the school has deployed Scriptel ST1550 signature pads in each department at every facility. Allen says his team's experience had been the polar opposite of the last one, noting that the cost of the new devices is only slightly higher than the cost to repair the old devices. The pads are highly durable, do not require batteries, and are completely plug and play, he says, noting that even clinical units that resorted to paper forms during the signature pad outage are now coming around to using the new pads.

Instead of getting daily calls about broken devices, Allen's team has had to send fewer than five out for repair since purchasing 300 of them in 2019. "Not hearing the phone ring about a signature pad issue has been phenomenal," he says.

The initial rollout was fully supported by the Scriptel team. "They said: 'We know how to make these work in your environment,'" says Allen, adding that the pads run fine in the school's older Citrix 6.5 version. They're easily moved from desktops to laptops, quickly recognized each time they're plugged in with no need to log out and back in. That dovetails with the needs of the teachers and students as they move from chair to chair getting patient and supervisory sign-off on each treatment plan. At the end of the day, all units are returned to the dispensary and sterilized in preparation for the next day.

Dental students spend the first three years of their program in the main building in Greenville. During their senior year, they spend a six-week rotation in each of the eight community service learning centers in the state. "The idea," says Allen, "is for students to get to know the communities and consider relocating there for an existing practice, or open their own in an underserved area. It's been a great model for us." And having the same physical layout, software, and hardware at each location, including signature pads, makes those rotations workable.

"They pads are now virtually everywhere in every building, being used in every facet of the school from patient check-ins and check-outs to cashier stations and every dental chair," says Allen.



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