

## Investing wisely

It's been a full year since Kootenai Medical Center invested nearly \$200,000 in a diagnostic imaging tool called TeraRecon.

That investment has revolutionized the way radiologists and physicians read X-rays. Instead

M.D., medical director of North Idaho MRI. "If you need to get more of a 3-D view, you need another tool."

### SUPPORT TOOLS

That's why KMC installed two TeraRecon workstations and eight



Al Martinez, M.D., KMC radiologist and medical director of North Idaho MRI, reviews patient scans using the TeraRecon system.

of extracting information from a traditional black-and-white film, doctors can now give a more complete diagnosis with the help of state-of-the-art visualization software.

Once a patient has a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or computed tomography (CT) scan, the captured images are transferred onto a hospitalwide imaging program called Stentor. The program gives radiologists a two-dimensional view of a patient's X-ray.

"However, that's only half of the equation," says Albert Martinez,

reading stations throughout the diagnostic imaging department.

TeraRecon gives specialists a powerful three-dimensional, cross-sectional view into a person's muscular and skeletal systems as

## A Peek Inside

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well as internal organs. For example, if a patient has a shattered ankle from a sports injury, the radiologist can examine the fracture from the axial (top to bottom), coronal (front to back) and sagittal (right to left) planes.

"In most cases, the plane films are enough, but when you have a very complicated fracture, the need to use TeraRecon is essential," Martinez says. "It's always nice to have an extra way to assess an injury."

In fact, the program also gives specialists increased ability to manipulate images. If a patient has calcified plaque in a coronary artery, the radiologist can subtract, or peel away, layers of the image until the artery is solely exposed. He or she can also view the artery in grayscale, which provides more definition, to reveal bright blemishes where plaque has accumulated.

"This has allowed doctors to look at the heart and the coronary arteries in a whole new way," Martinez says.

### MULTIPLE USES

The TeraRecon system also has the capability to lead radiologists through a virtual colonoscopy, or "fly-through," of the colon. This program gives doctors an edge in discovering polyps, or protruding outgrowths, that are precancerous.

"The more information we can get with tools like these, the fewer invasive procedures we have to do," Martinez says. "It's a seamless environment." ■



Physicians can review their patients' scans in the hospital or remotely from their homes or offices in a seamless digital environment for faster diagnosis and treatment.