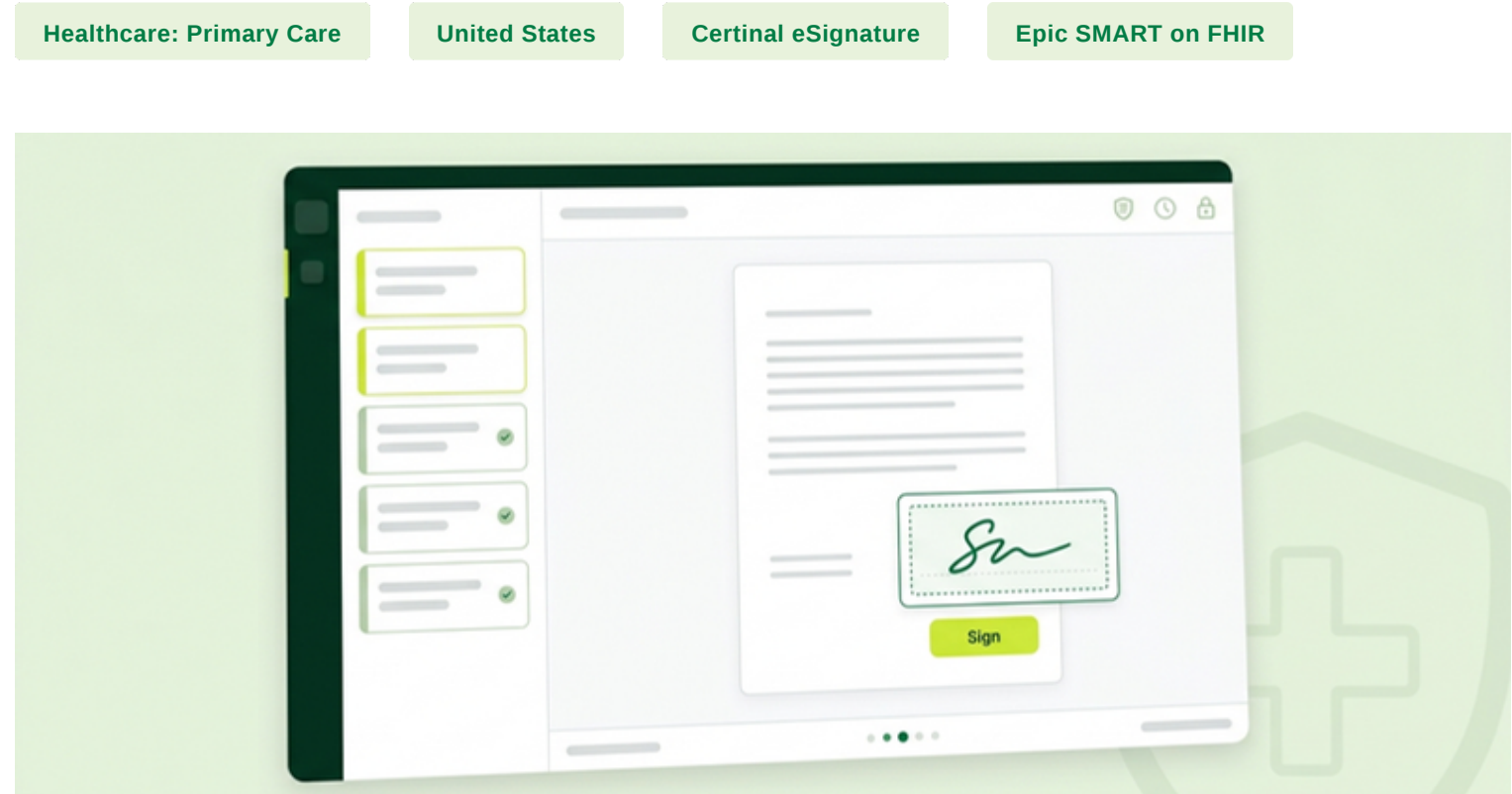


# From the Fax Queue to a Five-Minute Patient Document Signing

How a North Carolina primary care network moved every physician signature inside Epic



A multi-site primary care network operating 12+ clinics across North Carolina partnered with Certinal to digitize its physician document signing workflow. The organization ran its clinical operations on Epic but processed 7,000+ documents weekly through a print → sign → scan → upload loop. Within weeks of deploying Certinal eSignature with a native Epic SMART on FHIR integration, the network eliminated \$210K+ in annual paper-handling costs, reduced per-document turnaround from up to 1.5 hours to under 5 minutes, and closed the audit gap on every non-standard document — all with zero custom development.

## Challenge

The organization generated thousands of inbound documents weekly — referrals, lab results, specialist correspondence, insurance authorizations — all requiring physician review and signature. But no eSignature tool in their stack could handle non-standard, non-templated documents. The entire workflow ran on paper, and every previous tool evaluation had failed at the same point.

7,000+ DOCS / WEEK

PRINT → SIGN → SCAN

MANUAL UPLOAD TO EPIC

ZERO AUDIT TRAIL

- **Process failure at scale** — 7,000+ documents cycling through a 4-step paper loop with no status tracking.
- **Physician time consumed** — Each document took up to 1.5 hours from fax receipt to signed filing in Epic. No SLA enforcement or escalation.
- **PHI on uncontrolled channels** — Every fax was PHI in transit on an unencrypted channel, landing on shared machines. Chain of custody unverifiable.
- **No audit trail** — Non-standard documents had zero systematic capture of who reviewed, when signed, or version integrity.
- **Hidden cost: \$210K+/year** — Three FTEs absorbed by the fax-to-filing cycle. No single budget line captured the cost.

## Solution

Certinal deployed its eSignature module with a native Epic integration using the SMART on FHIR standard — requiring zero custom development, no middleware, and no parallel infrastructure.

THE DECISIVE CAPABILITY

Legacy platforms require documents to be pre-structured into templates before signing. Certinal handled the full document range — templated forms and non-standard documents alike — in their original format. No pre-processing. No template mapping. This was the capability gap that the print-sign-scan loop existed to fill.

- Native Epic SMART on FHIR integration — zero custom development
- Non-standard document signing without template preparation
- Two-click bulk signing across all documents for a patient
- Automatic filing back into the patient record on completion
- Complete audit trail generated on every document, every time

01

Document arrives as digital signing task in Epic

➤

02

Physician reviews in original format inside Epic

➤

03

Legally binding eSignature applied with authentication

➤

04

Signed artifact auto-filed to patient record

➤

05

Immutable audit trail generated automatically

## Results

The impact was measurable within weeks of go-live. What was once a multi-step, multi-hour paper exercise compressed to under five minutes of deliberate, in-platform action.

< 5 min

Per-document turnaround — down from up to 1.5 hours

\$210K+

Annual cost eliminated across 3 FTEs

7,000+

Documents signed digitally per week

Zero

Platform switches per document

2 clicks

Bulk signing—all docs for a patient

100%

Audit trail coverage on all documents

PHYSICIANS & CLINICAL TEAMS

- Single-platform review and signature inside Epic Non-standard document signing without template prep
- Automatic filing back into patient record
- Two-click bulk signing per patient

IT & INFRASTRUCTURE

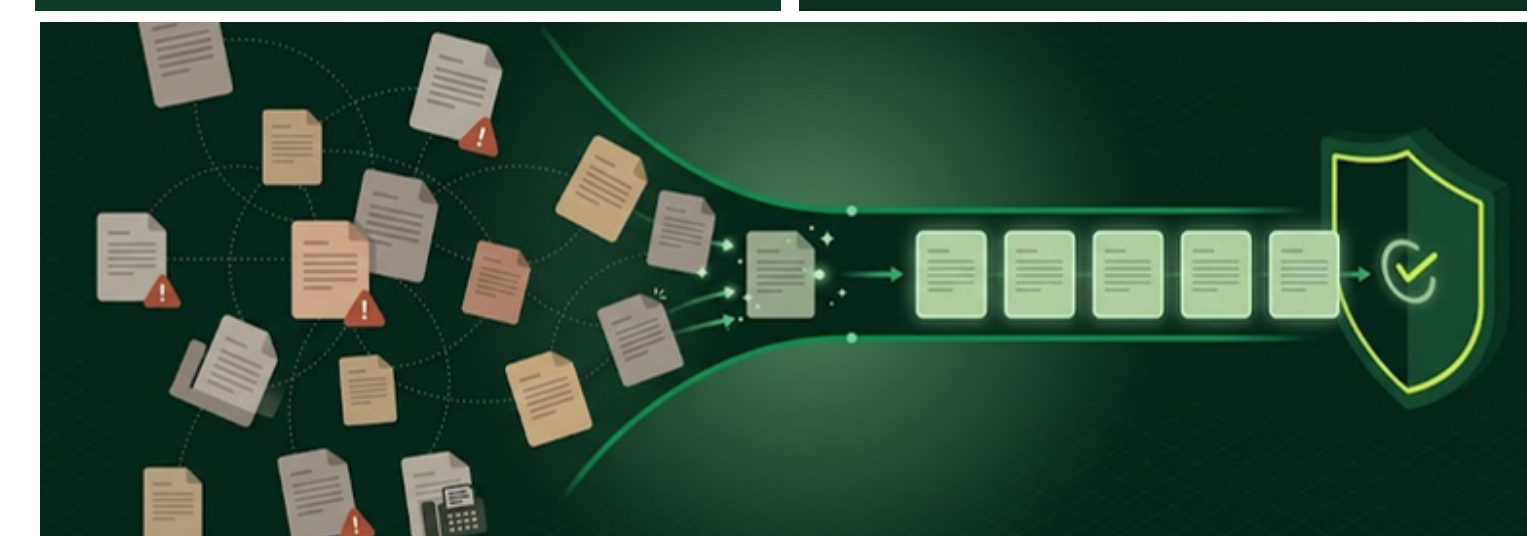
- SMART on FHIR — zero custom development
- Epic remains system of record
- No parallel document stores
- Fax machines removed as security surface

OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATION

- Print → sign → scan → upload cycle eliminated
- Real-time status visibility on every document
- No physical fax or scanning dependency
- Near-zero marginal cost per document

COMPLIANCE & PRIVACY

- Immutable audit trail on every signature PHI
- no longer on unencrypted fax channels
- Chain of custody verifiable and exportable
- On-demand evidence pack for audits



## Why It Worked

The approach worked because it operated at the intersection of two capabilities that no previous tool delivered together:

**The document capability gap was closed**

Most eSignature platforms are built for outbound, controlled documents. Certinal handled the inbound reality — referrals, lab reports, and third-party forms arriving in formats you don't control — in their original format, without template preparation or reformatting.

**The adoption barrier was eliminated**

The SMART on FHIR integration embedded signing natively inside Epic. Physicians didn't switch platforms or learn a new interface. The paper disappeared from their day, and a digital signing task appeared in its place — inside the system they already used for everything else.

Ready to close the document loop in your health system?

Request a Demo

Global Compliance & Security

HIPAA

FDA

AICPA SOC 2

GDPR

ISO 27001