PITON Global

MEDICAL RECORDS RETRIEVAL · PHILIPPINES

The turnaround standard: the executive economics of medical records retrieval outsourcing to the Philippines.

An analysis of why requests processed is a volume vanity metric, how turnaround time and record completeness — never retrieval throughput — decide the true cost of a release-of-information operation once re-requests, care and billing delays, and disclosure risk are counted, and the vendor-selection discipline that gets the complete record out on the clock.

AUTHORS

John Maczynski — Chief Executive Officer
Ralf Ellspermann — Chief Strategy Officer

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ABOUT THIS SERIES — VOLUME 24

Every records-retrieval proposal is priced per request processed, because throughput is easy to count. This volume is about the only retrieval outcome the care, the claim, and the case actually depend on: the complete record, released to the right requester, inside the turnaround the law and the workflow demand — without a re-request, a delay, or a wrong disclosure. The gap between processing a request and completing it on time is where re-work and risk live. The full series lives at piton-global.com.

THE PITON-GLOBAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

About the authors

John Maczynski

Chief Executive Officer

John has bought records-retrieval capacity for three decades, and learned that the fast vendor who closes requests and sends the wrong pages is the most expensive one a health system can hire — because every incomplete pull is a re-request, a delayed claim, a stalled care decision, and, at worst, a disclosure to the wrong hands. His standing question ignores the request-closed report: of the records you released, how many were complete, correctly disclosed, and out inside turnaround? Applied at PITON-Global, that question is what clients get on every retrieval sourcing decision — personally, with no account layer in between.

j.maczynski@piton-global.com
+1 402-598-8740

Ralf Ellspermann

Chief Strategy Officer

Ralf has spent twenty-five years running Philippine health-information floors, and he judges a retrieval team by its turnaround and completeness, not its requests-per-day: whether the record leaves complete, to the right requester, inside the clock — or comes back as a re-request and a complaint. The retrieval contract in Section 3 codifies what he learned rebuilding teams that closed requests fast and released half a chart. He now reads retrieval providers the way he once ran them — from the re-request log and the disclosure audit backward.

r.ellspermann@piton-global.com
Manila, Philippines

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ABOUT PITON-GLOBAL

PITON-Global is a buyer-side advisory practice, Manila-based since 2001, that has never operated a delivery floor or taken a placement commission. Its stock-in-trade is knowing the Philippine provider market at the operating level — 1,000+ mapped operations, re-verified continuously, including each retrieval team's real turnaround and completeness rather than its requests-per-day headline — and converting that knowledge into a shortlist of six to ten genuinely qualified partners per engagement. Buyers from Tripadvisor, Garmin, TSYS, HealthPartners, Yetipay, Workrise, and Norman Disney & Young have run their searches through the practice.

SECTION 01

Executive summary

−58%	<2d	99%+	5.9×
Fully-loaded cost per completed retrieval vs. US onshore	Median turnaround on vetted teams, down from 7–14 days	Record-completeness rate on vetted teams, up from 88–94%	First-year ROI, reconstructed case (Section 6)

A records-retrieval engagement is bought on the price per request and paid for on the records it sends late or incomplete. The vendor reports three hundred thousand requests processed at a fraction of the onshore cost; the health system finds the re-requests for pages that were missing, the claims held because the chart never arrived, the care decisions stalled waiting on prior records, and the disclosure that went to the wrong requester because authorization was never verified. The operation hit its requests-closed number and the health system inherited a re-request backlog, a billing delay, and a compliance exposure it did not price. The gap between processing a request and completing it on time is where the real cost of cheap retrieval hides, because an incomplete or late record is not a request closed — it is a request that has to be worked again, and sometimes a breach.

The Philippines is where medical records retrieval is delivered with the most turnaround discipline, because a deep, HIPAA-trained, document-literate talent pool can run the requester verification, complete pull, and on-clock release that turnaround demands. Five findings:

1. **Requests processed is the industry's most flattering number.** Any team can mark a request closed. Vetted teams are measured on outcome: turnaround time, record completeness, and disclosure accuracy. Weak providers quote a low per-request price the health system repays in re-requests, delays, and breach risk. Section 2 shows the gap.

2. **The complete pull, not the fast close, is the product.** A record that serves the care, the claim, or the case comes from pulling every page the request needs and verifying the requester before it goes — not from closing the ticket to hit a number. Teams that pull it complete are done once; teams that pull it fast and partial generate a re-request queue that costs more than the request is worth.

3 **A late or wrong release costs more than a slow one.** A record out of turnaround delays a payment, a treatment, or a legal deadline; a record released to the wrong requester is a HIPAA disclosure event with penalties attached. Vetted teams hold completeness above 99% and turnaround under two days precisely because the tail — the missing page, the wrong recipient — is where the money and the liability leak.

4 **The re-request and the delay, not the keystroke, are what cost.** A request done wrong costs the re-work, the follow-up, the days a claim or a case waits, and the exposure of a mishandled disclosure — many times the per-request saving. Teams that hold turnaround and completeness cut re-requests and speed everything downstream, and that recovered time — not the offshore rate alone — is where the case study's return is built.

5 **Contract on the completed retrieval, not the closed request.** The contracting failure of retrieval is paying per request and hoping it was complete and on time. Vetted deals price against turnaround targets, completeness floors, and disclosure-accuracy minimums, making the completed record the team's problem, which is where it belongs.

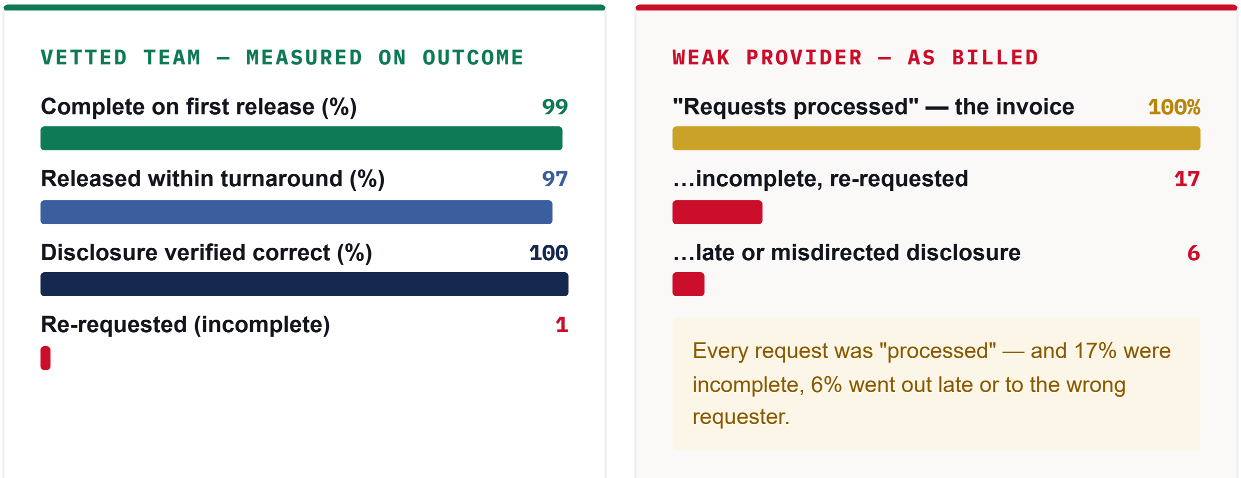
The intended reader is an HIM director, release-of-information manager, or operations leader buying records retrieval per request and paying for it in re-requests, delays, and disclosure exposure. Sections 2–4 separate the teams that complete on time from the teams that close volume; Sections 5–7, the method and the proof.

SECTION 02

The volume mirage: requests processed versus complete, on-time retrieval

Figure 1 shows one month of a health system's requests two ways: as the productivity report a weak vendor bills, and as the turnaround-and-completeness reality the requesters actually experience. The requests-processed number is identical in spirit to a chatbot's containment rate — a figure engineered to look like output while re-requests, delays, and disclosure risk accumulate underneath.

FIG. 1 — ONE MONTH OF REQUESTS: TURNAROUND-AND-COMPLETENESS QUALITY VS. REPORTED PRODUCTIVITY



Left: PITON-Global engagement instrumentation, 2025–26, turnaround audited. Right: composite of pre-engagement vendor reporting reviewed in diligence.

The economics follow the turnaround and completeness, not the request count. On the left, ninety-nine percent of records are complete and ninety-seven percent released on time, so downstream work moves and no disclosure goes astray; on the right, a cheap per-request price re-works seventeen percent and misdirects six, paying in re-requests, delays, and breach risk at once. A low per-request price that generates re-requests is not a saving; it is re-work and liability, delayed and partly permanent. The turnaround-and-completeness audit — median TAT, completeness rate, disclosure accuracy — is the cheapest due-diligence instrument in this paper.

SECTION 03

The retrieval contract: verify the requester, pull it complete, release it on the clock

Figure 2 lays out the three clauses of a working retrieval contract — the machinery a floor read verifies before any per-request price is believed.

FIG. 2 — THE RETRIEVAL CONTRACT, AS OPERATED ON VETTED TEAMS

VERIFY THE REQUESTER

Every request is checked for a valid authorization, the right requester, and the minimum necessary scope before a single page is pulled — so no record goes to the wrong hands and no more is disclosed than the request permits. The disclosure is made lawful at the source, not defended after a breach.

PULL IT COMPLETE

Every page the request needs is located across every system and source, quality-checked for completeness and legibility, and assembled once — so the record serves the care, the claim, or the case on the first release. An incomplete pull is treated as a defect to eliminate, not a re-request to bill.

RELEASE IT ON THE CLOCK

The record is delivered inside its turnaround target through the requester's channel, the disclosure logged, and the aging queue kept inside its limits — with a turnaround report the health system can read. An on-clock release is one where the complete record arrives before the deadline, which is the only outcome the workflow actually feels.

↓ yields ↓

THE COMPLETED RETRIEVAL

99%+ COMPLETE · <2-DAY TURNAROUND · DISCLOSURE VERIFIED

Records go out complete the first time, turnaround holds inside target, and every disclosure is to the right requester — so downstream care, billing, and legal work stops waiting and no breach accrues. The operation gets cheaper per completed retrieval and safer at the same time, which is the entire promise of outsourcing retrieval to people who measure turnaround, not requests closed.

Operating parameters from PITON-Global health-information engagements, 2025–26.

In diligence, the contract is tested from the requester's side: pull a month of closed requests and measure true turnaround and completeness against what was asked; check the disclosure log for authorization verification and minimum-necessary discipline; verify the re-request rate against the request volume. Perhaps one team in ten survives it cleanly. Steps 3 and 5 of the framework exist to find that one before the contract does — because everything in Table 3 of Section 6 depends on completed retrievals, not requests processed.

SECTION 04

Cost and performance: cost-per-completed-

retrieval economics and benchmarks

TABLE 1 — FULLY-LOADED COST PER COMPLETED RETRIEVAL: THREE OPERATING MODELS (2026)		
OPERATING MODEL	COST / COMPLETED	VS. US BASELINE
US onshore in-house ROI team	**$11.40**	baseline
Low-cost offshore retrieval mill (per-request)	**$7.80**	**−32%**
Vetted Manila team — verified, complete, on-clock	**$4.79**	**−58%**

Basis: PITON-Global engagement pricing 2025–26; cost per completed retrieval = fully-loaded operating cost divided by requests completed correctly and on time (re-requested and misdirected excluded); the retrieval mill looks cheap per request but re-work and delays lift its true cost per completed retrieval; US comparator fully-loaded in-house cost.

TABLE 2 — RECORDS-RETRIEVAL BENCHMARKS, VETTED VS. BASELINE (2025–26)			
METRIC	VETTED TOP TIER	BASELINE	EXECUTIVE READING
Record-completeness rate	**99%+**	88–94%	Done once, or re-requested
Median turnaround time	**<2 days**	7–14 days	The clock the workflow runs on
Re-request rate vs. baseline	**−64%**	baseline	"Pull it complete" — held or not
Disclosure-accuracy rate	**99.9%+**	97–99%	Right requester, or a breach
Requests aged past SLA	**<3%**	15–25%	Out on time, or aging out

Source: PITON-Global health-information engagement data 2025–26; baseline = typical pre-engagement operations billed on requests processed.

The strategic read: the retrieval mill's −32% per request is a false economy — re-requests, follow-ups, and delays lift its true cost per completed retrieval far above the per-request gap, and a misdirected disclosure can cost more than a year of savings. The vetted Manila team's −58% is real because it is measured where the value is: the record completed correctly, released fast and to the right requester. Buy on requests processed and you buy the right column of Figure 1; buy on cost-per-completed-retrieval and you buy turnaround — the same discipline every volume in this series keeps arriving at from a different door.

SECTION 05

Sourcing discipline: the 7-Step Vendor Vetting Framework, applied to records retrieval

Retrieval diligence adds one hard requirement to every step: a per-request price is real only when the turnaround and completeness behind it survive a request-log audit. The funnel below is representative of a 25–50-seat release-of-information search.

FIG. 3 — THE 7-STEP FRAMEWORK AS A RECORDS-RETRIEVAL FUNNEL

	STEP	WHAT IT ELIMINATES IN A RETRIEVAL SEARCH	FIELD REMAINING
1	**Requirements definition**	Throughput-first scoping: fixes the turnaround target, the completeness floor, the disclosure-accuracy minimum, and the SLA-aging standard the operation must meet by request type	1,000+
2	**Market mapping**	Retrieval mills: operations that bill request volume and treat re-requests as the client's problem, and generalist floors with no ROI or health-information depth	~42
3	**Capability screening**	Teams without the machinery: audited turnaround history, a requester-verification workflow, a complete-pull QA gate, and multi-system source coverage	~12
4	**Compliance & security audit**	Weak data governance: HIPAA and PHI protection, minimum-necessary discipline, access controls on the EHR/ROI systems, HITECH breach discipline, SOC 2 scope covering the retrieval stack	~8
5	**Operational diligence**	The log read: pull closed requests and measure true turnaround and completeness; review the disclosure log for authorization verification; interview on how they pull a multi-source record	4–6
6	**Competitive RFP & negotiation**	Per-request pricing: finalists bid against turnaround targets, completeness floors, and disclosure-accuracy minimums — all carrying credits for records that come back incomplete or late	2–3
7	**Transition & launch governance**	Cold cutover: the team calibrates against your source systems and request mix on a sample before it owns the queue, with the turnaround floor certified before steady state, PITON-Global embedded buyer-side	1

Field-remaining counts represent a 25–50-seat release-of-information search, PITON-Global engagements 2024–26.

The standing guarantees hold: **vendor neutrality** — PITON-Global operates no retrieval floors, pulls no records, and takes no placement economics, so the shortlist reflects audited turnaround performance, not inventory; **right-sizing** — teams for whom your operation is a flagship account. Six to ten genuinely qualified providers, delivered within 48–72 hours, free to the buyer, competing through a fully transparent, fair, comprehensive, and highly competitive RFP.

SECTION 06 · ANONYMIZED CASE STUDY

Re-basing the operation on turnaround: a 36-seat release-of-information rebuild, reconstructed

Engagement MRR-041 is a US multi-facility health system — processing roughly 620,000 record requests a year across care coordination, billing, legal, and patient-request channels — that had offshored release of information to a per-request vendor. The request price was excellent; the turnaround was not: completeness sat near 90%, median turnaround ran past ten days, re-requests were high, and a misdirected disclosure had triggered a breach review. The HIM director wanted the arbitrage without the re-requests and the exposure. Identifying details are anonymized under NDA.

SELECTION (WEEKS 0–8, LOG READS)

Requirements fixed a 99% completeness floor, a sub-2-day turnaround target, and a 99.9% disclosure-accuracy minimum, with a mandatory requester-verification workflow. Mapping produced 42 claimants; the machinery screen — audited turnaround history, verification workflow, complete-pull QA, multi-system coverage — left 12; the HIPAA-and-compliance audit left 8. Request-log reads on each finalist's closed requests shortlisted 5. A Manila team won priced against turnaround and completeness, with a turnaround audit written into the reporting spec.

TRANSITION (MONTHS 2–7, QUEUE CLEARED FIRST)

The team calibrated against the system's source EHRs and request mix and worked down the aged-request backlog before owning the steady-state queue; the turnaround floor was certified in month 3. The complete-pull QA gate ran from day one. By month 7 completeness reached 99.3%, median turnaround dropped below 2 days, re-requests fell 64%, and requests aged past SLA dropped below 3%. PITON-Global chaired the turnaround review board to steady state.

TABLE 3 — MRR-041 FIRST-YEAR VALUE BUILD-UP (US$)		
VALUE COMPONENT	YEAR 1	BASIS
Labor arbitrage on the 36-seat retrieval operation	$1.10M	67.5k productive hrs × ($25.60 − $9.30)
Downstream value (faster billing & care decisions)	$0.30M	Days removed from claim and care-coordination cycles
Disclosure & breach exposure avoided	$0.14M	Misdirected-disclosure and penalty risk removed
Re-request & follow-up reduction	$0.10M	Lower re-request and follow-up load vs. baseline
Gross value created	**$1.64M**	
Less: engagement & transition costs	($0.28M)	Calibration, backlog work-down, EHR/ROI integration; advisory fee $0 (provider-paid model)
Net value ÷ cost = first-year ROI	5.9×	$1.64M ÷ $0.28M

Figures rounded; turnaround, completeness, and disclosure effects audit-verified. Method in Methodology & notes.

Sixty-seven percent arbitrage, thirty-three percent from faster downstream cycles, avoided exposure, and reduced re-requests — a typical split for the series, earned because the operation was re-based on turnaround rather than requests closed. Every line traces to a diligence step: the completeness floor to Step 1, the turnaround-based pricing to Step 6, the requester-verification workflow to Step 3's contract. The HIM director's line at the year-one review: "The request price barely moved. What moved is that the records show up complete, on time, and to the right person."

SECTION 07

The executive playbook: governance for the first 180 days

A retrieval transition succeeds when the team is measured and paid on turnaround and completeness — client in command throughout.

DAYS 0–30

Define turnaround, contract on it

Set the turnaround target, the completeness floor, and the disclosure-accuracy and SLA-aging thresholds with HIM leadership before launch, and document the requester-verification workflow by request type. Contract against turnaround and completeness — never per request alone — with targets and floors carrying credits. Stand up the turnaround audit as the program's arbiter of truth.

DAYS 30–90

Calibrate the pull, clear the backlog

Calibrate the team against your source systems and request mix and work down the aged-request backlog before it owns the steady-state queue; certify the turnaround floor and complete-pull QA. Switch on the verification workflow from day one. Publish the turnaround dashboard: completeness rate, median TAT, re-request rate, disclosure accuracy, SLA aging.

DAYS 90–180

Own the queue, certify steady state

Hand the steady-state queue to the team only after it holds the turnaround floor and completeness rate. Review the turnaround board monthly with the disclosure log on the table. Certify steady state on two months at floor including a peak-volume cycle; hand over on documented criteria; keep the quarterly log audit standing.

THE FIVE FAILURE MODES WE ARE HIRED TO PREVENT

Paying per request while re-requests pile up · releasing without verifying the requester · pulling partial records to hit a throughput number · letting requests age past SLA no one manages · owning the steady-state queue before turnaround is proven. All five are settled at selection and contract.

The records-retrieval argument, in one sentence: a processed request is activity and a completed retrieval is a record that serves the care, the claim, or the case, and a vetted Philippine team delivers −58% cost per completed retrieval with 99%+ completeness, sub-2-day turnaround, and re-requests cut by nearly two-thirds — for buyers who audit the turnaround instead of counting requests processed, and compete the finalists through a fully transparent, fair, comprehensive, and highly competitive RFP. Anyone can close a request. We make sure you buy the team that completes it on time.

METHODOLOGY & NOTES

How the numbers were built

Turnaround and completeness figures (Fig. 1, Table 2) derive from engagement instrumentation in PITON-Global health-information engagements, 2025–26. Turnaround and completeness are measured against the request specification and delivery timestamps; re-request rate, disclosure accuracy, and SLA aging are measured against the client's pre-engagement baseline. The weak-provider column is a composite of pre-engagement vendor reporting reviewed in diligence, shown for contrast.

Cost-per-completed-retrieval figures (Table 1) are fully loaded — wages, benefits and statutory charges, facilities, technology and ROI-platform tooling, management and QA overhead including verification and QA specialists, attrition-driven recruiting — divided by requests completed correctly and on time, with re-requested and misdirected records excluded from the denominator; US comparators reflect fully-loaded in-house cost on the same basis. A completed retrieval is a complete record, correctly disclosed, released inside turnaround.

The case study (MRR-041) is anonymized under NDA; volumes and dates are generalized, figures rounded. Turnaround, completeness, and disclosure effects are audit-verified; the downstream-value line reflects days removed from billing and care-coordination cycles, and the exposure-avoided line is a conservative estimate. ROI = net first-year value ÷ all engagement-related client costs. PITON-Global's advisory fee is provider-paid and appears at $0 in the client cost base; neutrality safeguards are documented at piton-global.com.

Market context draws on IBPAP reporting and PITON-Global's proprietary provider mapping (1,000+ operations; retrieval turnaround and completeness re-verified May 2026). Estimates and projections are PITON-Global analysis and should be cited as such. The full series is available at piton-global.com.

Would your provider's request price survive a turnaround audit?

Thirty minutes with John will tell you. Free to buyers, strictly vendor-neutral — a turnaround-verified shortlist within two to three business days.

j.maczynski@piton-global.com
+1 402-598-8740