

Hospital Employs Communication Solutions to Reach Doctors Faster

Mercy Regional Medical Center implements Magpie Healthcare’s communication application on unified network to automate on-call contacts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>MERCY REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare • Durango, Colorado • 700 full and part-time employees; 135 board-certified physicians representing 35 medical specialties and subspecialties
<p>BUSINESS CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty connecting to correct on-call personnel in timely and efficient manner • No standardization for on-call schedules or workflow • Inefficiencies in logging calls and reporting trauma incidents to meet state requirements
<p>NETWORK SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unified communication platform to enhance communication to on-call staff • Automated on-call schedule collection and distribution, eliminating paper trail
<p>BUSINESS RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatly improved access to on-call schedule via desk and wireless phones • Simplified web administration interface allows consistent on-call schedule management • Automatic capture of call logs and histories through electronic devices per physicians preferences

Business Challenge

Mercy Regional Medical Center (MRMC) in Durango, Colorado, is ranked in the top 10 percent of hospitals in the country in nine different processes of care measures, including heart attack, heart failure, and surgical site infection prevention. Despite its excellent performance, MRMC still uses manual calling and paper phone lists for people-to-people communications.

In an effort to understand alternatives, Karen Otterstein, medical staff services director, spent six weeks researching on-call scheduling tools. After consulting with peers and colleagues, she determined there were no products that met all of MRMC’s needs. They settled on a freeware solution with limited capabilities.

Every month, Medical Staff Services gathers and enters the on-call schedules of 27 different healthcare providers into a central repository. It is overwhelming and tedious, and leaves them with the task of delivering dozens of paper schedules to hospital

departments and personnel. Every schedule update necessitates a repeat of the delivery process. In addition, to comply with requirements of the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) to retain on-call schedules for five years, they manually file paper copies of all schedules. Infractions can cost more than US\$10,000 per incident.

When a critical patient arrives in MRMC’s Emergency Department (ED), on-call doctors may require immediate consultations with specialists such as orthopedic surgeons and anesthesiologists. ED technicians find these people using manual phone calls and pages, and paper schedules written daily by charge nurses. If the first doctor does not respond, they use other contact sheets to find additional names and phone numbers. This process repeats until all specialists are contacted, tying the tech to a phone.



Network Solution

In 2006, MRMC standardized its communication platform using a Cisco® unified communication solution. In July 2008, they installed the CareConnect solution from Magpie Healthcare in the ED. Magpie Healthcare is a Cisco technology development partner.

CareConnect automates the process of contacting on-call staff, reducing user error and connection times, and eliminating the sizeable volume of paper, hand-written schedules and phone lists. With the push of a phone button, callers launch the automatic process to contact an on-call responder. Callers do not stay on the phone. Instead, they are freed-up for other work while CareConnect automatically finds on-call staff and launches live calls back to the caller. CareConnect logs all calls, enabling medical executives to monitor the effectiveness of the on-call staff.

MRMC provides ED doctors with the CareConnect solution on a Cisco Unified Wireless IP Phone 7921. Before CareConnect, ED doctors worked through ED techs to contact on-call specialists for consultations. By the time an ED tech was able to reach a specialist, the doctor could be in another exam room, creating a time-consuming “telephone tag” scenario. With CareConnect, the return call goes directly to the ED doctor’s wireless phone, regardless of location. This eliminates the ED tech as a middleperson in the communications process.

“Magpie Healthcare has done a great job in listening to our users. The product they deliver shows that they listen.”

—Neil Stock, IT director, Mercy Regional Medical Center

When asked if there are other solutions like CareConnect in the marketplace, Neil Stock, IT director at MRMC, says, “Not for one-stop shopping. We expected to buy two or three applications to meet our needs. The Magpie Healthcare product is an integrated solution.”

CareConnect works on wired and wireless phones. Installation takes less than a day and requires no extraordinary processor capabilities or storage capacity, and the initial population of on-call databases requires a few hours. In addition, user training is simple.

Business Results

The CareConnect solution enables MRMC to improve its overall workflow and achieve measurable improvements in communications. Nurses are no longer required to make manual calls using paper lists and then wait on the phone for someone to answer. They are free to perform other tasks while CareConnect does the calling. Responders are located up to 50 percent faster, and interdepartmental calls to find out who is on call are significantly reduced.

MRMC plans to evolve and improve its communication at a broader level, expanding the deployment of CareConnect to the Family Birth Center, Medical Surgery, and Communication/PBX departments, and using it for code calls and trauma activation.

PRODUCT LIST

Voice and IP Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Solution
- Magpie Healthcare CareConnect On-Call Application
- Magpie Healthcare CareConnect Resources Application

Wireless

- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7961
- Cisco Unified Wireless IP Phones 7921

As to where CareConnect solution is going next, Stock says, "Integration with clinical data and expansion to more endpoints across the hospital. It can fill quite a few different needs. Magpie Healthcare has done a great job in listening to our users. The product they deliver shows that they listen."

For More Information

To find out more about the Cisco Healthcare industry solutions, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/web/strategy/healthcare/index.html>.



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