

New communication platform improves care delivery



A modern communications platform, a replacement for pagers, has led to improved delivery of care at the Hospital for Special Surgery in Manhattan. As the platform allows faster communication between members of care teams, better coordination and faster response times are achieved.

With improved communication via the PerfectServe platform, for instance, the response time for moving a patient from the post-anaesthesia care unit to an inpatient floor has significantly improved. Now, about 90 percent of moves are completed in less than 15 minutes, said Nick Wirth, director of operational excellence at the hospital.

Clinicians and staff at the facility used to communicate through pagers. Because pagers from three different companies were being used, Wirth said communications often were dropped.

The hospital has a high volume of patients and shrinking lengths of stay, and it had become critical to have a reliable enterprisewide strategy supported with modern information technologies that included the PerfectServe communication platform, as well as a new electronic health record system in 2016 from Epic. When the EHR went live, the organisation pilot tested best practices with groups of small physician practices using standardised workflows across departments.

Next came a project to improve clinician communications with the goal of centralising all calls and covering assignments on the PerfectServe platform. This enabled providers to assign patients and direct them to the provider who would be responsible for their care throughout the treatment plan.

Today the platform supports 3,400 staff, 700 of whom use personal mobile devices. Aside from physicians, other caregivers and support personnel that are on the platform include an interpreter, case manager or nutritionist; as well as housecleaning staff, information technology professionals and department administrators.

Other improvements achieved with the communications platform include sepsis alerts being escalated every minute until a doctor responds, and rapid response wait times of less than two minutes when a patient's clinical condition is deteriorating.

"Before the platform was adopted, we just didn't know what the response times were," noted Peter Grimaldi, assistant vice president of assistant vice president of the physician assistant department and a care coordinator.

In addition to the enhanced communication strategy, the hospital launched another initiative to improve surgery start times, giving physicians a more accurate schedule and reducing backups. This is important not just for clinical and patient comfort reasons, but because patients stay in the hospital after surgery a fraction of the time that they used to, Grimaldi said, adding that, "The average length of stay is not measured in days now but in hours."

Source: [Health Data Management](#)

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