

Illinois Hospital Provides Secure, 24/7/360° Access to Patient Information

The future of patient care in the Chicago area is on display at Central DuPage Hospital. This acute-care hospital uses the latest in stealth technology to treat brain tumors, has perfected procedures in state-of-the-art heart surgery and has recently developed a technique using biogenetically engineered bone protein for minimally invasive back surgery — one of the first hospitals in the nation to do so.

So it's no wonder that Central DuPage is also setting the pace in the use of cutting-edge information technology and wireless communications to improve delivery of patient care, reduce the likelihood of medical errors and make medical practitioners and other caregivers more productive.

Challenge: 24/7/360° access to patient data

To achieve its goal of “one enterprise — one record,” Central DuPage is implementing an electronic medical records system from McKesson, a leading healthcare services and information company. Much of that system is now in place and patient clinical data is available to caregivers via PCs. The hospital also installed an 802.11 wireless LAN throughout the complex. The wireless LAN, along with the proliferation of hand-held data devices, prompted Dr. James Thompson, medical director of Informatics at Central DuPage, to look for a way to provide 24/7/360° (anytime, anywhere) access to patient information.

Another challenge was how to support physician-owned PDAs and other devices that were not Wi-Fi compatible.

Solution

Sprint helped Central DuPage address these challenges by deploying a multi-platform wireless solution that offers three ways to access patient information. All work in tandem with McKesson's Horizon MobileCare™ Rounding application, which provides patient demographics, transcripts, lab and radiology reports, medications and nursing information sized for small screens. Caregivers who are within range of the hospital's 802.11 wireless LAN can now access this information from the point of care, doctors' lounge or wherever their rounds take them.



Central DuPage Health

is an interdependent network of healthcare organizations and services in the Chicago suburbs. It includes Central DuPage Hospital, with a medical staff of nearly 800 physicians, convenient care centers, occupational health services and a full range of options for senior living, home health and hospice care.

The 361-bed, acute-care hospital, located in Winfield, Ill., is the second busiest surgical center in the state with more than 21,000 surgeries performed annually. Specialty areas include cardiology, orthopedics, neuro/spine and pediatrics.

For more information about Central DuPage Health, visit www.cdih.org.



Access via the high-speed Sprint Nationwide PCS Network is another solution implemented by Central DuPage. After exhaustive research, the hospital determined that cellular phones can safely be used in most areas of the hospital without interfering with electronic equipment and monitoring devices. Sprint teamed with Spotwave Wireless to extend its PCS signal into the hospital, using Spotwave adaptive repeaters. Caregivers now have the option to use the Sprint Nationwide PCS Network to access patient information inside the hospital and out, a particularly important capability for those who do not have Wi-Fi-enabled data devices.

A Wi-Fi ZONE™ from Sprint provides a third option for physicians who want to access patient medical records via their own Wi-Fi-enabled devices. The Wi-Fi ZONE from Sprint is integrated into the hospital's existing wireless LAN but kept separate from it for security reasons. To ensure security for "untrusted" devices, such as those owned by physicians for personal use, the connection is routed immediately through the hospital's encryption server.

As the first hospital to qualify as a Wi-Fi ZONE, Central DuPage also gives patients and visitors access to the Internet and their e-mail at megabit speeds. Sprint manages the billing for these services on the hospital's behalf, in effect creating an additional revenue stream without creating more work for the patient billing department.



“Our partnership with Sprint gives us the ability to access patient information securely in and out of the hospital and allows us to deliver on our goal of offering cutting-edge medical care.”

*Dr. James E. Thompson, Medical Director of Informatics
Central DuPage Hospital*

Challenge: connecting home and hospital

Central DuPage's home healthcare nurses needed a direct, instant way of communicating with their off-campus, home health-based supervisors and others when they were making their rounds. Central DuPage began looking for a voice solution that was more efficient and less costly than standard cellular service and a data solution that supported the high speeds required to productively access a McKesson Horizon Homecare application.

Solution

The hospital chose Sprint PCS VisionSM for high-speed data service up to 144 Kbps in combination with Sprint PCS Ready LinkSM, a walkie-talkie-styled service for instant voice communications. The Sprint PCS Ready Link device can do triple duty for data, Ready Link calls and regular cellular calls. For home healthcare workers, Sprint PCS Vision messaging service also replaces traditional pagers with real-time communication. Not only does this reduce the number of devices that home healthcare workers have to carry, but it also helps simplify many of the daily processes that they perform.

Bottom line

Dr. Thompson believes "the world is not becoming 'wired' but 'wireless.' For the clinician, there is a powerful difference between walking to an information source such as a computer screen and having the information in hand."

With the Sprint multi-platform wireless solution, physicians and other caregivers can now review patient data in real time virtually anywhere and anytime, collaborate with their colleagues and make better-informed decisions on patient care based on the real-time data. Dr. Thompson adds that "excellent information exchange attracts excellent physicians in a clinical world where information is so vital and yet so dispersed," giving Central DuPage a strategic advantage in expanding its top medical staff.

As for the home healthcare environment, hospital officials expect to enhance the productivity of their nurses, enabling them to spend more time on patient care and less on paperwork. Through faster turnaround on insurance forms, officials anticipate the hospital will receive reimbursements more quickly, which will improve cash flow.

Why Sprint?

When you choose Sprint, you're in good company. In fact, more than 95 percent of the Fortune 500 use Sprint for data, Internet, voice or wireless solutions as do more than 26 million customers of all sizes in 100 countries around the globe. The reasons are clear and compelling:

- Sprint is truly dedicated to understanding your needs and challenges and committed to developing tailored solutions that can help improve your productivity and effectiveness
- Sprint is the service provider best positioned to offer a total networking solution — one that integrates wireline and wireless services — so your employees can be connected seamlessly and securely, virtually anywhere their jobs take them
- Sprint remains one of the most financially stable companies in the industry with the resources required to maintain high service levels
- Sprint is a recognized leader in quality customer care, service reliability and product innovation

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