

Aspirus Healthcare Simplifies OR Paging with InformaCast



The Challenge

Aspirus Healthcare was renovating its operating rooms and did not have a plan for incorporating its intercoms for overhead paging. It was also facing obstacles from its legacy paging system which needed to be replaced. The facility needed a simple system for communicating with medical staff while not sharing sensitive pages with patient families.

The Solution

Aspirus turned to its existing Cisco phones to enable InformaCast for pre-recorded paging. This provided a cost effective means to establish standardized paging procedures throughout the hospital, and designate zones so certain pages are only heard in specific areas.

Improved Paging

Aspirus Healthcare serves 60,000 people in central Wisconsin and northern Michigan through eight hospitals and more than 40 clinics. Matt Neyrinck is a senior communications tech at Aspirus Healthcare in Wausau, Wisconsin. One of Neyrinck's main goals is to use the technology the organization currently has in new ways to make the lives of the people who work in the hospital easier, so they can provide excellent patient care.

During a renovation to update the surgical operating rooms of an Aspirus hospital, Neyrinck saw an opportunity to streamline the buildings paging process. During the renovation it was discovered that there were no plans to integrate an intercom system into the new operating rooms. Incorporating them at that point of construction would have been a costly purchase that also would have delayed the opening by 4-6 weeks.

At the same time, Neyrinck was looking for a way to replace the legacy paging that was well past its prime. "We wanted to look at something that was going to be more reliable, because in an OR setting, you can't have downtime," said Neyrinck.

He suggested using the hospital's Cisco phones to implement InformaCast for medical paging. This allowed him to set up a uniform paging system, so regardless of what operating room was being used, the paging codes on the phones would be the same. This also allowed him to designate specific paging zones, which was helpful in protecting patient families from hearing sensitive pages.



Critical Code Blue Paging

When a family is waiting for a loved one to get out of surgery, the last thing they want to hear is a “Code Blue” page for the operating room their loved one is in.

“We used to do ‘Code Blues’ throughout the whole hospital,” said Neyrinck. “All of sudden you’d hear the page with the room number, and if you know that’s where your family member is, that’s not a good feeling.”

“Code Blue” pages signal a patient is going into cardiac arrest or has stopped breathing. This is a critical alert to mobilize medical professionals for assistance, but hospitals need to be sensitive to the fact that hearing this kind of alert can cause unneeded stress for family members.

Neyrinck uses InformaCast to establish paging zones throughout the building to ensure the proper pages are being heard by the right people. “Code Blue” pages that provide the room number are restricted to the surgical area. A tone is played throughout the rest of the building to alert medical staff a “Code Blue” is taking place and signals them to check their personal pagers to see if their assistance is needed. This keeps “Code Blue” pages discreet and eliminates creating unnecessary worry among family members.

Dirty Elevator Solution

Aspirus is also finding creative uses for InformaCast that have helped solve issues with efficiently cleaning surgical supplies. The hospital delivers dirty surgical supplies to its sterilization and cleaning area by sending a cart down from surgery via an elevator. However, there was no easy way for hospital staff to alert the cleaning team that dirty supplies were being sent down. This resulted in the elevator filling up and supplies not getting cleaned in a timely manner.

Neyrinck worked with the surgery manager to incorporate InformaCast so staff could alert the cleaning team with a simple push of a button. When the equipment is loaded onto the elevator, the team member who loaded it presses a button on a nearby Cisco phone that automatically triggers a page alerting the sterilizing team that dirty supplies are on their way down. Localized paging zones mean the message is only sent to the sterilization area and does not disrupt other hospital routines. The same system is used when supplies are cleaned and sent back up to the surgical area. This saves time and reduces stress.

Going Beyond Paging

As Aspirus perfects and expands its InformaCast paging, it is also looking to take advantage of other InformaCast features to enhance its mass notifications for scenarios beyond medical issues. Neyrinck is currently demoing the InformaCast CAP plugin to eliminate the need and cost of weather radios currently in place. This will allow Aspirus to automatically alert staff when severe weather is approaching.

InformaCast helps healthcare facilities across the country with overhead paging, security, safety and more to provide the best possible patient experience.

Visit www.singlewire.com/solutions-healthcare.html for more information about how to implement InformaCast in healthcare facilities.