Healthcare Facilities Communicate with Crisis Teams Using InformaCast

The Challenge

With a goal of providing excellent patient care, Riverside Healthcare in Illinois needed a way to communicate critical information to staff to help manage crisis situations. It also needed to update its paging system to a more versatile mobile solution.

The Solution

Riverside implemented InformaCast in its healthcare facilities to quickly communicate critical information to large groups of people who could help respond to whatever incident they faced.

Leveraging New Communication Methods

Riverside Healthcare provides medical services around the Kankakee area of Illinois. Healthcare facilities need to have the tools that help them respond to patient and visitor needs quickly and keep them safe. For Gabriel Vasquez, security manager for Riverside Healthcare, that means taking a proactive approach to prevent dangerous situations from occurring.

His team uses InformaCast as a communication tool to keep large numbers of people and targeted groups, like senior leadership, informed of potential crisis situations. As soon as a switchboard operator hits a button to activate a message, it is sent to the mobile devices of the people that need to be informed. With more than 400 people using the InformaCast Mobile app, information spreads quickly.

According to Erik Devine, Chief Information and Security Officer for Riverside Healthcare, they use Cisco and other IP technologies to reach various communication systems in ways they never could before.

"We can pass information from a phone to a desktop to an IP speaker to mobile devices to reach people anywhere at anytime," said Devine. "This makes people well aware of anything that is happening at our facilities."

Messages can cover everything from basic notifications and downtime notices to severe codes.
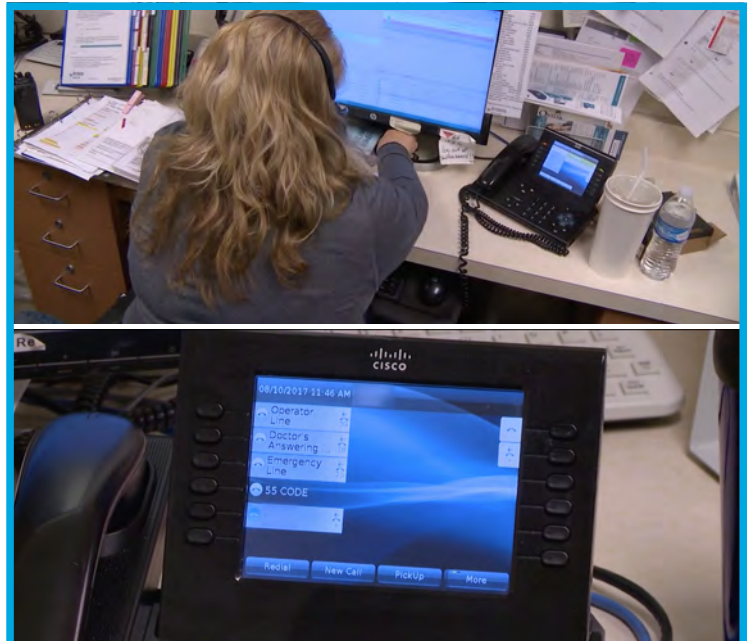
Managing Large Scale Emergencies

When an emergency occurs, local police officials will contact the hospital to notify them that they can expect an influx of patients. This activates a response plan, which includes communicating that there has been an incident to a large group of people who can help manage the incoming situation.

When a school in the area had an incident involving carbon monoxide poisoning that sent a large number of patients to one of Riverside's hospitals, Vasquez issued a Code Yellow, which is used when they need assistance from all departments. These groups includes doctors, security personnel, nursing staff, behavior health, mental health specialist and chaplains. Vasquez was able to leverage InformaCast to inform everyone and begin coordinating the response needed to assist the situation.

InformaCast is initiated through the Riverside switchboard operators who then initiate the InformaCast notification. Messages are sent to mobile devices through a mobile app. This provides the recipients the details they need about the situation without needing to call for further information.

Connecting with Remote Locations

Riverside Healthcare has 36 different locations, and in more remote areas, it can be challenging to keep everyone in the loop about situations happening in more urban areas. Events like severe weather can impact the day-to-day functions of remote facilities as heavy snow can prevent or delay staff from arriving at work. These locations can monitor weather and determine whether staff need to be sent a message through InformaCast.

An Easy to Use Solution

The IT team, security personnel and switchboard operators all work together to manage InformaCast and determine best practices for Riverside and its facilities. It minimizes the need to have people call back for more information, resulting in speedy response times.

"It's a very cost-effective system," said Devine. "We're very happy with the output and input we have into the system from multiple departments. It's very easy to use and administer…It's been a very solid solution for Riverside Healthcare."

In the future they are looking to utilize InformaCast's desktop phone capabilities, and expand its functionality to include automatic weather alerting and assist with situations, such as active shooters.

Visit www.singlewire.com/informacast-healthcare to learn more about how InformaCast can be deployed in healthcare environments.

> " It's a very cost-effective system. We're very happy with the output and input we have into the system from multiple departments. It's very easy to use and administrate…It's been a very solid solution for Riverside Healthcare.