



It's all about Effective, Efficient Communication: That's Just the Bottom Line

Focus on McLeod Health

Founded in 1906, McLeod Health is a not-for-profit, regional healthcare organization that serves a 15-county area and a population of over one million in north-eastern South Carolina and south-eastern North Carolina. To uphold its commitment to improve the health of the people of its community, McLeod relies on Airbus DS Communications emergency notification technology to communicate with its approximate 6,600 physicians and staff.

Since implementing the VESTA® Communicator (formerly The Communicator!® NXT™) notification solution in 2007, McLeod has expanded from three hospitals to five. Regarding this growth, Michal Ferber, Director of Telecommunications with McLeod Health, stated, “the VESTA Communicator solution has been flexible – it’s definitely grown with us. While the transition wasn’t easy, the system has made the transition smoother. Having the policies and procedures in place meant we only had to build our groups for the additional personnel.”

If you were to ask Michal, who has been involved with the VESTA Communicator solution since day one, what they use it for, he’ll tell you “everyone and everything.” From disaster notifications to day-to-day operations, Michal and his team activate their system on average 25 times per day.

Their home health office typically uses the VESTA Communicator solution every other day to disseminate information to their employees, all who work in the field. Inside the hospital the nursing director will send “high census alerts” to physicians when the hospital has reached full capacity and needs to expedite discharges. It is also used for every emergency code, as well as for drills and exercises. But much of the VESTA Communicator solution’s use is for scenarios where Airbus DS Communications Application Programming Interface (API) is involved for integration with other systems and tools.

For example, after-hours visitor announcements are scheduled through the VESTA Communicator solution and pushed through overhead speakers. Cardiac Catheter team after-hour call backs are also a prevalent use. Michal

explained, “If we need to do an emergency catheterization after hours, the emergency call is dispatched to our operator who has a one-button activation feature on her console. Through the integration, our program will automatically look to see who’s on call, create a scenario within the VESTA Communicator solution and then make secure voice calls to on-call personnel.”

VESTA Communicator’s API option was a huge selling point for McLeod Health. “When we were looking for a notification system, the number one item on our list was integration. We wanted a system that had an API available, so we could exploit every feature, every bit of potential. We didn’t think of it as buying an emergency notification system. We were going to get a notification system that we can use for disasters, as well as for everything else.”

Michal has noticed much efficiency in comparison to the manual communications methods they employed before. He remarked, “For emergency codes, the operator was spending five minutes to manually call everyone and get everyone dispatched to a code. Using the notification system, we have reduced that to a minute-and-a-half – that’s a huge difference.” He added, “Same thing with our cath team; it was taking up to 10 minutes to call everyone and get them in route to the hospital, and we’re now doing that in a minute-and-a-half. This has significantly improved our door to balloon time.”

Getting to this point has come with its lessons, and Michal is a firm believer in practice makes perfect. “One thing we have learned is the more you use the system, the more you figure out the things to do and not to do, like with any system,” Michal commented. “I tell everybody to use it for everything. Don’t think of it just as an emergency tool – use it for everyday logistics. Then it becomes second nature when you need it for a disaster, not only from a user standpoint, but for those receiving the calls and responding to prompts. It helps every way around.”

In his venture to get the most McLeod Health can from the VESTA Communicator system, Michal is always thinking ahead. His next move? “Increased capacity. We talked about going with a hosted model when we purchased VESTA Communicator,” said Michal, “but at that time, the cloud made everyone nervous. Technology has changed and time has changed, and we have too. The on-site system is quick, but it’s important to me to be quicker - however we can most effectively and efficiently communicate with employees. That’s just the bottom line.”

The team at Airbus DS Communications is excited to work with Michal and his team on migrating to the hosted model of the VESTA Communicator solution. We always enjoy the opportunity to watch McLeod Health take it to the next level, and look forward to what the future brings with this innovative customer!

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September 3, 2014