



UMC Health System, Lubbock, Texas



BACKGROUND: UMC Health System is located in Lubbock, Texas. This comprehensive health care delivery hospital services more than 300,000 patients a year from West Texas, Eastern New Mexico and from as far Oklahoma in the north. It employs almost 3,000 people, with over 500 physicians representing 50 different fields. Through its partnership with Texas Tech University, it has led the way into groundbreaking research and technology, and provides a number of advanced patient services. UMC offers the region's only Level I Trauma Center and first in the state of Texas, a Children's Hospital first to have a neonatal and pediatric intensive care unit, the renown Harnar Burn Center as well as the Southwest Cancer Treatment and Research Center. The System has been honored as one of the best places to work in Texas, and in 2009 an employee satisfaction rating in the 97th percentile when compared with hospitals nationwide.

"SERVICE IS OUR PASSION": While public health institutions across America have struggled to preserve services and funding, UMC Health System has bucked the trend. Reduced funding, and the rise in costs and uninsured patients, has not prevented UMC from fulfilling its "Service is Our Passion" commitment. UMC's operational efficiency, due in large part to a service-oriented culture driven by motivated

and well-trained employees and an unwavering commitment to high-quality healthcare, has also been affected through the adoption of leading-edge technologies that have impacted its operations.

CHALLENGE: In 1993, UMC became the first facility in Texas to receive the Texas Department of Health's Level I Trauma Center designation. It is still the only accredited trauma center in the West Texas region that can treat the most serious injuries, burns, and illnesses imaginable. UMC's fully trained trauma staff operates in its own 21-bed Surgical and Trauma ICU accepting trauma patients from West Texas, as well as neighboring New Mexico and Oklahoma.

Due to a high volume of patients, and the unpredictability and time severity of the trauma patient injury or illness, response time is a huge determining factor between life and death. To meet strict call out and compliance requirements for a Level I Trauma Center, trauma staff requested IT to replace a legacy manual call down phone tree system to faster automated communication system. With an improved notification system, critical communications would ensure the right personnel have been contacted and mobilized to their stations.

SOLUTION: To ensure smooth and successful message delivery, HipLink was selected to deliver these critical text alerts and notifications to approximately forty cell phone recipients. Messages are rapidly sent to recipients so they quickly know the nature of the emergency, an estimated time of arrival and what staff resources would be required.

“We require key components to improve our Trauma I Center communications,” said Chief Information Officer Bill Eubanks. “First, as a web-based application we needed a system that was easy to use and learn for the administration staff. We also needed a system with flexibility to support a number of devices such as pagers, cell phones and PDAs on any carrier using all communication channels.”

HipLink User permissioning engine and Department features offers the flexibility needed to grant permissions to various administrators and sub-administrators. The message notification can be launched by authorized Users directly from any computer. After logging into HipLink, they select the appropriate individual, Group or Groups, compose the text message and hit the “send” button. HipLink maintains all the relevant information on each designated receiver including their cell phone type, carrier, and optional contact methods such as pagers or email delivery.

“It’s really the flexibility that has made it a high-quality notification tool,” Eubanks said. “Although it was originally purchased to help us meet the Trauma I response requirement, it is being relied upon in many ways.”

HIPLINK USED FOR HOSPITAL-WIDE BROADCASTS:

For all hospitals, knowing of a real or potential emergency is vital to patient safety. HipLink is also used beyond its Level I Trauma Center application to facilitate a hospital-wide alert system. A special hospital code system will notify staff of urgent matters such as a severe weather or fire outbreak or in everyday operating communications such as questions about bed capacity. For a hospital as large as UMC and their 390 beds, keeping patients safe is no small undertaking. Communications is a key component to smooth operations during emergency situations as well as normal operating conditions.

CONCLUSION:

The flexibility of HipLink continues as UMC discovers new and special applications. For example, to support the hospital’s innovative “No One Dies Alone” program for terminal patients, the hospital’s pastor is able to reach out to and mobilize individual volunteers who spend time with these patients.

For the future, HipLink is being considered in a number of new ways both within the IT group as well as other hospital departments. UMC Health System has truly grasped the importance of advanced wireless communications in order to help fulfill their well-deserved “Service with a Passion” motto.



HipLink Software
408 399-6120
800 524-7503 Toll Free
HLsales@hiplink.com
www.hiplink.com