



Gundersen Lutheran Health System is a comprehensive healthcare network serving a 19-county region in western Wisconsin, northeastern Iowa and southeastern Minnesota. It also serves as the designated Western Clinical Campus for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Medical School and School of Nursing. Gundersen Lutheran has reduced the time required to maintain on-call schedules—and increased their accuracy—by implementing Amcom’s on-call scheduling software.

ON-CALL SCHEDULING AND PAGING AT THE CLICK OF A MOUSE

The Challenge

The Telecommunications Department at Gundersen Lutheran Health System serves multiple facilities and departments. One of the call center’s key services is an online system for maintaining on-call schedules of staff and physicians so that they can be accurately reached at all times via phone, email or pocket paging. The call center was burdened by the necessity to utilize multiple programs to access staff information and efficiently contact on-call staff.

“Our work is mission critical. We needed a system that allowed all internal users immediate access to on-call information and paging, but not other confidential information. We wanted a calendar view and the ability to page instantly from the screen. Our old system wouldn’t do that,” says Janet Olmstead, Telecommunications Manager at Gundersen Lutheran. “We also wanted a system that could be updated in realtime and that any staff member could use from any PC in our organization.”

The Objective

- Reduce hold times and improve the average answering speed
- Reduce the labor hours required to input and maintain on-call schedules
- Utilize a centralized on-call scheduling system for multiple facilities
- Enable all employees to look up on-call information from any Intranet-connected PC without having to log in separately
- Provide a user interface that would be easy to use
- Enable departments to update their own on-call schedules
- Enable pages to be sent from the same interface showing on-call availability

The Solution

After evaluating on-call scheduling applications from several vendors, Gundersen Lutheran chose the Amcom on-call scheduling system. All of Gundersen Lutheran’s facilities and affiliates now have access to the on-call schedules via their Intranet, and can search for information by person, on-call service, date, time, and/or other criteria. Gundersen Lutheran has approximately 140 staff on-call per day, with over 50 departments and 98 schedulers that now maintain their own on-call schedules more quickly than before, saving an estimated 140 hours or more per month. Since the operators already utilize the Amcom switchboard product, all 22 operators are also trained to provide backup scheduler duties as needed.

New Feature: Online Paging

The Amcom on-call system's on-line paging feature has become very popular at Gundersen Lutheran. "Our critical areas love it," says Olmstead. "A nurse can go to any PC, bring up any on-call service and page the provider without having to wait for the health unit coordinator to look it up and place the page. We are even now in the process of implementing on-line paging for the whole organization, not just on-call staff." Prior to the Amcom web paging, text paging was only available if the end user was given access to another program, wireless office. Now when a user clicks on the paging icon, a box appears describing the recipient's pager model and the type of message it can receive, (numeric or text). It also specifies how many characters are allowed in the message field.

Additional On-call Features

- Accessible by all staff, via any computer logged on to the corporate Intranet
- Ability to schedule multiple days and shifts at one time
- Monthly, printable calendar view of services
- Pop-up on-call service instructions for call clarification and ease of use
- Confidentiality of staff's private information, which is only viewable to the Telecommunications operators
- A link to the on-line employee directory
- Viewable staff referral/coverage exceptions, with automatic paging of covering staff
- Easy-to-read, color highlighted view of active on-call staff
- Printable backup hard copy reports

The Results

- Rapid paging from the on-call schedule has reduced paging time and increased staff response, which is critical in patient care
- Easy access to all Gundersen Lutheran employees, who can look up on-call information from any in house PC that is connected to the corporate Intranet, without entering an additional password
- Total labor time required to maintain on-call schedules has been reduced by approximately 140 hours per month
- Sword-authorized department schedulers, as well as operators, can now enter on-call schedules in advance and perform daily updates as needed
- On-call schedules served by Gundersen Lutheran are stored in one centralized database
- The Amcom user interface is easy to use and linked in realtime to the call center data and HR system in use at Gundersen Lutheran



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