

Emergency Communication Improvements in Healthcare: A Case Study



Gundersen Lutheran Health System is a healthcare network serving a 19 county region in the Midwest. It also serves as the Western Clinical Campus for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Medical School and School of Nursing. Realizing that in an emergency, saving time equates to saving lives, Gundersen implemented an emergency communication system that shaves precious minutes off response time.

THE CHALLENGE

Gundersen wanted to ensure the protection of their support staff of a 5,000 serving 19 counties in an emergency, which is no small feat. “Communication is the number one requirement for successfully coping with any disaster,” explains Janet Olmstead, Gundersen’s telecommunications manager. “That’s why we wanted an automated emergency notification system to manage and respond to emergencies as efficiently as possible. If we can coordinate efforts and send information in a timely fashion, we can save lives and money.”

THE OBJECTIVES

- Expedite emergency notification within Gundersen’s 19 county region
- Ensure accurate strategic communication delivery that is documented, auditable and repeatable
- Ensure efficient response by appropriate Gundersen medical and administrative staff
- Meet readiness standards defined by the Joint Commission

THE SOLUTION

Gundersen chose e.Notify from Amcom Software for its rich feature set and for its compatibility with the hospitals existing telecommunications system. “Since we were already using Amcom’s Smart Console operator system and Smart Web applications, we wanted to integrate with existing data and other relevant opportunities. For instance, Gundersen’s existing on-call scheduling system enables e.Notify to contact on-call staff immediately without additional steps in the process. e.Notify accommodates emergency-related variables necessary to reach the right people with the right information at the right time. Anyone can activate notification, depending on the nature and location of the emergency.”

In addition, Gundersen plans to use e.Notify to alleviate critical-care staffing shortages and communicate equipment failures and outages. For example, if the telephone system is down, e.Notify will initiate text messaging. If the paging system is down, it will initiate cell phone notification.

THE ROLLOUT

Gundersen focused on implementation of e.Notify on Code White toxic and trauma burn emergencies. Future plans call for non-employees, such as city officials, to be added to the system for effective coordination of services in handling catastrophic emergencies. “Integration with outside emergency personnel will help us better support our community, our staff, and our patients,” says Olmstead.

THE RESULTS

- Confirmation of notification response enables better tracking, reports and management. By having a complete view of a situation, better decisions can be made.
- A communication system that automates not only emergency communications but also day-to-day business continuity.
- A flexible system supports various types of emergencies – weather, chemical or trauma. The system is customized by user or event.
- Peace of mind that the system and tools are in one place to prevent and support critical situations such as staffing shortages, equipment failures and weather-related catastrophes.

CONTACT US

For more information about Amcom Software and e.Notify, call 888-337-9274 or visit us online at www.amcomsoftware.com.