

RealView™ reduces patient status phone calls by 60% at Baptist Medical Center



CHALLENGE

With the Surgical Services department handling an average of 1,600 phone calls per shift to coordinate patient throughput within its operating rooms, Mississippi Baptist Medical Center began seeking a way to more effectively communicate.

SOLUTION

PeriOptimum's RealView* patient tracking solution automated workflow communications using radio frequency identification (RFID) technology to track OR patients, visualize patient flow, capture events and streamline surgical process.

RESULTS

Within months of installing the solution, Baptist Medical Center reduced calls related to patient status by 60%, greatly increased communications effectiveness, and raised patient satisfaction.

An affiliate of Baptist Health Systems, Mississippi Baptist Medical Center is a 564-bed hospital that performs 12,000 surgical procedures per year. The challenge of tracking surgical patients at Baptist Medical – besides the high volume of procedures – is compounded by the organization's multiple patient intake areas that are spread across a large geographic area, which complicates communications to coordinate patient throughput.

Before using RealView, the Surgical Services department relied on phones, pagers and verbal communications to coordinate patient throughput for the multiple operating rooms (ORs). In fact, an internal evaluation revealed that an average of five phone calls were required to communicate patient status among the Surgical Services staff, and that each shift handled an average of 1,600 calls.

"Every day we have inpatients and outpatients entering from multiple points, and we face a very dynamic schedule with many operational variables. Managing throughput from pre-op to post-op to discharge is a major challenge, and we felt we could improve it," said J. Kempf Poole, FACHE, director of Surgical Services at Baptist Medical.

Baptist Medical began searching for a surgical patient tracking solution in 2004, and was about ready to purchase another solution when it discovered RealView. "What we liked about RealView was the solution's ability to automatically collect data using RFID. The automated processes resolved our communications and administrative challenges. And, the collected data enhanced our reporting capabilities," Poole said.

In March 2005, the Baptist Medical staff started using RealView and began realizing substantial benefits within only a few months. "I expected that the solution would help us reduce our department's call volume by 30% to 40%, but I was pleasantly surprised that RealView actually cut our call volume by 60%," Poole said.



RealView augments existing surgical scheduling and documentation applications by incorporating active RFID-based indoor location technology to track patients. Placed near or on each surgical patient, the RFID locators transmit signals that are received by the RealView system, which records the location of patients, the status of procedures and collects operational data. As a result, RealView provides organizations with an “air-traffic controller” perspective of all surgical cases across departments and even throughout multiple facilities. This enables organizations to optimize scheduling and increase OR capacity by providing organizations with the tools to manage bottlenecks and late arrivals by staff, or to handle situations when procedures take longer than anticipated. In addition, some of Baptist Medical’s surgical staff use RealView to view the status of patients from their offices, so they specifically know when they’re needed in the OR, which prevents them from being late or having to wait while a procedure is finishing.”

“We’ve definitely found a correlation between improved awareness and increased efficiencies,” Poole said. “Staff members regularly monitor RealView’s screens and take immediate action when needed. We’ve been able to reduce time between cases and be better prepared in each stage of our processes. Efficiencies are improving to the extent that we may be able to reduce length of stay.”

Additionally, RealView helps communicate the status of surgical patients to family members in waiting rooms. Each surgical waiting room at Baptist Medical contains a plasma monitor that displays the status of patients. To protect the privacy of patients, code numbers – in place of the patient names – are used to identify the patients on the monitors. Family members

are given the code for the patient, and they can view whether the patient is ready for surgery, the procedure is underway, there are delays or surgery time has been extended, or the procedure is complete. In addition, family members can access patient status at kiosks within each waiting room and in the cafeteria.

RealView’s data capture capabilities provide Baptist Medical with a wealth of information to analyze throughput and capacity issues that

can increase efficiency. The RFID technology automatically captures and time-stamps events for later analysis.

“In the future we plan to create a data warehouse for the data so we can compare the performance of our facility with others,” Poole said. “But already, I’ve got surgeons coming up to me with new ways to use the time-stamped data. When that happens, you know you’ve got buy-in.”



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