Erie County Medical Center, Leading the Way for Medical Mobile Device Deployments

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Background

Erie County Medical Center has been a model of wellness in the Buffalo, NY community for over a Century, providing state-of-the-art care long before advanced medical procedures or prescription drugs. Technology in healthcare has come a long way since the hospital's foundation. The Medical Center is now a "Level I" Trauma Center providing the highest level of specialty expertise to as many as 400 patients at any given time. This June, the Trauma Center deployed mobile device technology to 55 of their Anesthesiologists, Attendings, CRNAs (Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists) and Residents with the goals of improving patient care, eliminating paper processes, streamlining workflow and reducing costs.

Challenge

Before they could implement any type of mobile device initiative, the Erie County Medical Center Anesthesia Department had several critical factors to consider:

- How will this project improve patient care?
- How will we protect the devices, digitally and physically?
- How will the initiative fit into/change the current workflow?
- How do we train our already very busy staff?
- How will this solution save the hospital money?

Solution & Results

The conversation to roll out mobile devices began almost two years before implementation–and because of the due diligence of the IT Team, Erie County Medical Center was able to overcome every single challenge before the launch of the mobile device program, leading to a flawless transition from paper to mobile devices.

Improved Patient Care: By switching from manual paper processes to digital records, the hospital was able to streamline workflow, providing patients with a more efficient hospital experience. Hospital staff members were also able to standardize and improve data entry accuracy which led to fewer billing errors.

Protecting Data and Devices: Hospitals must be extremely diligent in protecting patient information. Because of this critical component, the Erie County Medical Center chose a security solution even before they made a final decision on the type of mobile device they would implement. Without addressing this crucial step, the project would never have been able to move forward. They implemented MDM

software to address digital security. And because 41% of data breaches are caused by stolen devices, the LocknCharge FUYL Tower Charging Locker was implemented to address physical security, enabling Providers to lock up their devices while not in use.

Streamlined Workflow for Staff: Using devices to input electronic medical records greatly reduced data entry time spent by patient services staff members. Records were immediately updated in the system, and the billing process became more efficient.

Convenient iPad access was imperative to a seamless workflow transition for the Providers at Erie. During their shift, healthcare staff would need to carry the iPad the entire time, either in their pocket (iPad mini) or in an over-the-shoulder pouch (iPad).

Because of the small footprint of the charging unit, the FUYL Towers could be placed in the Operating Room office and the Anesthesia office where Providers get ready for the start their shift, making device pickup quick and easy. Each staff member was assigned an individual locker inside the FUYL Tower to charge, store and secure their mobile device. They even had the ability to set their own 4-digit PIN number, making it easy to remember. Should anyone forget their code, the hospital's Helpdesk was there to retrieve forgotten PIN numbers or to open a locker remotely. At the end of their shift, the Provider would secure their device in the FUYL Tower. Using a centralized charging station ensured that devices were easy to locate, charged and ready for use 100% of the time.

Staff Training: Many of the healthcare providers at Erie had never used an iPad before, so the IT Team began a weekly training program in June of 2018, three months before the program went live. They covered training for using the iPads, the software, the FUYL Towers and the new workflow. By September, when their staff had the devices in-hand, they were fully prepared–and even excited– about the mobile device program. The Network Team (IT Team) immediately embraced the plan and found the FUYL Towers very easy to use and manage.

Reducing Costs: Prior to implementing mobile technology, individual Providers would handwrite notes on paper medical forms. Those notes had to be deciphered by the rest of the medical staff as well as the billing department. Moving to electronic records ensured accurate patient records and correct billing, which saved the hospital valuable time and money.

Their security plan also decreased the likelihood that devices would go missing or be stolen, keeping the allocated budget for the devices on track and protecting the hospital from costly data breaches.

The FUYL Tower is also backed by a lifetime warranty, ensuring that their chosen charging solution would last well into the future.