



Ascom Wireless solutions decrease response time

Saint Mary's Hospital uses the Ascom® Freeset DCT1900 wireless communications system to save time and money.

MARKET Healthcare

ASCOM CUSTOMER St. Mary's Hospital

BENEFITS

- **Quicker response time for patient care**
- **Increases patient, employee, and physician satisfaction**
- **Supports JCAHO patient safety goal #2 : Improve the effectiveness of communications among caregivers**

PRODUCTS

- **DCT1900 Freeset System with 9p23 Medics.**
- **Mobility Server**

In the extremely competitive world of modern healthcare, medical facilities are constantly looking to increase efficiency and patient satisfaction scores. For St. Mary's Medical Center of Jefferson City, Missouri, purchasing a wireless system from Ascom Wireless Solutions Inc. was their solution.

With an Ascom solution, St. Mary's nurses are automatically notified via their wireless phone whenever their assigned patient presses their nurse call button for help. This approach allows the nurse to call directly back into the patient's room, thus facilitating an immediate response. Cheryl Kelly, St. Mary's Director of the Medical Floor says, "It definitely improves your response time for the nurse to respond to the patient."

Patients contact their attending nurse for a number of reasons, from something as simple as the request for water, to the more immediate request for additional pain medication. Regardless of the reason, the Ascom solution allows the attending nurse to discover the nature of the request, before he or she travels to the room. The nurses are able to "Talk Before they Walk."

"If I'm (the patient) pressing the button to tell the nurse that I need something for pain, the nurse can just pick up the phone, because the phone will connect directly to the patient through the call system, she doesn't have to go to the room..." Ms. Kelly says, "I (as the patient) can tell her I need something for pain, she can get this pain medicine and come to my room versus having to take the extra steps to get to my room, then going to get the pain medicine and then coming back to my room."



[The Freeset DCT1900] has improved our processes, and it has improved patient, employee and physician satisfaction.

— Cheryle Kelly, Director of Medical Floor, St. Mary's Health Center

Solutions that improve Internal Communication

Traditionally, it is a challenge to locate the majority of on-site personnel in a Medical Facility, in large part due to their highly mobile nature. However, an Ascom solution can allow facilities to assign a wireless phone to each member of the medical staff, allowing them to be accessible at all times, thus eliminating the time-consuming process of tracking down mobile employees for mission critical needs. St. Mary's employees decided to purchase the Freeset DCT1900 solution, in part because they believed it would improve internal communication.

"If I'm a staff nurse and I need my charge nurse, I know exactly what her number is and I can call her, versus going to look for her," Ms. Kelly says. "(The Ascom system) also helps with paging physicians, because they can call the nurse right back on her hip, versus to the desk." That being said, efficient internal communication is no longer a luxury for medical facilities, it is now a requirement for accreditation. The improvement of internal healthcare communication correlates directly to the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO's) 2004 patient safety goal #2, which requires providers to "Improve the effectiveness of communications among Caregivers."

Internal communication is also a foundation of JCAHO's Tracer Methodology, which focuses on the communication between various divisions of a hospital as a patient works his or her way through departments. The methodology is utilized whenever the commission is putting a health center, such as St. Mary's, through the accreditation process. Ascom's solutions inherently allow for the vital communication between various departments at St. Mary's.

Solutions that increase patient, employee and physician satisfaction

Increasing customer satisfaction was a key requirement for St. Mary's Medical Center when purchasing a wireless solution. Whether a patient was admitted for ambulatory surgery, to the emergency department or as an inpatient, St. Mary's, like other healthcare facilities, was looking to improve these vital patient satisfaction scores. These scores are eventually reported to healthcare satisfaction measurement companies, such as Press Ganey.

Ascom's wireless solutions facilitate the desired improvement in satisfaction by cutting out steps for nurses and doctors and lessening wait time for patients. Less waiting equals less anxiety. They do this by automating much of the previously labored

communication required within a medical facility. The implementation of an Ascom system can make for a more productive and pleasant environment. "It has improved our processes, and it has improved patient, employee and physician satisfaction" Ms. Kelly says.

The system has also reduced overhead paging throughout the facility, which affords patients the peace and quiet they need to heal. They are not constantly being awoken by nurse stations paging into their rooms looking for staff personnel, a process that can be especially irksome in the middle of the night, a common occurrence in inpatient environments that have not implemented a wireless solution. However, the strongest improvement in patient satisfaction can most likely be tied to the speedy attention that patients receive after the installation of an Ascom system. After all, it is tough to disagree with Ms. Kelly when she says, "If you can get your call light answered quicker, are you not happier?"