

STARTEL SYSTEM JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED FOR JOHNS HOPKINS

Since 1876, Baltimore-based Johns Hopkins has been recognized as a leading center for patient care, medical research, and teaching, treating nearly 600,000 patients annually. The Johns Hopkins Institutions comprise The Johns Hopkins Health System and Johns Hopkins University. Last year, they generated more than \$5 billion in income, about one of every 33 dollars in Maryland. The 1,039-bed Johns Hopkins Hospital is the top-rated hospital nationwide.

So it should come as no surprise that incoming/outgoing call traffic for the hospital is substantial. According to Pat Morrow, Manager of Telecommunications for Johns Hopkins, more than 8,000 calls are processed each day, all by the Startel Health Care Call Center, which has been in place since 1989. She said traffic spikes between 9:30-11:00 AM during the week, and again in the afternoon between 2:30-5:30 p.m.

"We demand a lot from the system and it has proven to be a real workhorse," said Morrow, who has been with Johns Hopkins for 36 years. "Our Startel system handles emergency calls, helps us process service requests and takes care of more than 8,000 pagers."

Emergency calls, for example, are routed through the Startel system. The hospital maintains eight 'code' teams that respond to particular types of emergencies, such as cardiac arrest. The Startel system automates this stat-team paging process, prompting operators through appropriate code procedures.

"We're able to immediately activate the team, who all carry alphanumeric pagers. They're notified as soon as the message is typed and entered," she said.

KEY FEATURES

Morrow said there are a number of system features that have not only increased productivity, but also have played a key role in improving doctor-patient communications. The hospital recently upgraded to *Startel's Workstation Module 4.0*, which lets operators work in a shared database environment.

"This allows us to have patient information in real-time and is tied in to our hospital database," Morrow said. "It not only makes it easier to do data exchanges but also supports Health Level (HL7) conventions for information transfer. 4.0 has saved us time and improved accuracy because external information can be pasted into the message field."

The **Physicians Answering Service** is used to provide service for over 200 doctors affiliated with the hospital, as well as another 75 physicians located off-site.

"Our physicians rely heavily on the service and we're able to provide advanced text messaging and paging with delivery via fax, PC, printer or the Internet," Morrow said. "The service also displays individual, custom physician and group practice profiles when the call comes in."

Customer Testimonial

Morrow added that two other features, ***Meet Me Page*** and ***Answer With A Smile***, are also very useful.

“**Meet Me Page** connects a holding caller to a paged doctor,” she said. “After our operators take a text message, they put the caller on hold, page the doctor and give the paged party a phone number so they can return the call.”

Morrow said the operators like **Answer With A Smile** because they can record their own greeting and the system plays the recording back with each new call.

Lastly, Morrow frequently utilizes the **Statistical Reports Package** because it provides her with incoming/outgoing real-time management reports. The reports provide Morrow with a critical barometer to determine how effectively the operators are processing calls. This allows Morrow and her management team to effectively evaluate peak traffic periods and determine abandon call levels (97 percent of all calls are answered within three rings).

“I don’t have to monitor every little detail because the Startel system does this for me,” Morrow said. “The support staff is superb and most of our concerns can be handled via remote maintenance. The bottom line is that the Startel system has enabled me to devote more time to long-term strategic planning and other corporate responsibilities.”