

BATES COUNTY MEMORIAL RELIES ON PANASONIC TOUGHBOOK MOBILE CLINICAL ASSISTANTS FOR EMR SYSTEM

Bates County Memorial Hospital, located in Butler, Missouri, is a 60-bed facility servicing Bates County and other surrounding regions.

Since 1960, Bates has been delivering quality patient care with a "hands-on healing" approach that patients usually receive when being cared for by family and friends. One way clinicians are able to invest more time in providing personal care and attention to each patient is through adoption of new technology.

Bates has invested more than \$1.5 million in state-of-the-art technology—typically not accessible to hospitals of its size—so that patients don't have to travel long distances to get quality medical care. Understanding the significance of utilizing technology in healthcare, Bates was ready to transition its 24-hour, physician-staffed emergency department from a "pen-and-paper" system to an electronic medical record (EMR) system that would allow the hospital to more efficiently manage ER patients and their records.

Prior to the introduction of the EMR system, clinicians in the emergency department had to hand scribe patient notes and then manually input them into the computer system, whenever possible. This process was especially cumbersome when discharging patients since the clerical staff had to manually scan and download each patient's signature into the computer system, causing major inefficiencies and increasing the risk of losing or incorrectly documenting critical patient authorization.

The first phase in the upgrade process was to determine the most appropriate EMR software; it chose EPOWERdoc system. The second phase was to select an EMR for the inpatient and outpatient areas; Bates selected MedGenix, by Creative Healthcare Systems and NextGen Healthcare. Once the selection of the software was finalized, the next phase was to select the right mobile computer.

Bates took a team-oriented approach when selecting the hardware. Based on the feedback gathered from the clinical staff, it was clear the best option was a tablet and touchscreen computer, as clinicians wanted to use the device to gain access to critical patient information, document patient authorization and monitor patient conditions and vital signs at the bedside—all while enhancing the efficiency of clinical workflow.



Toughbook H1 Health

The hospital also received support from B2B Computer Products, a reseller that helped guide the hardware selection process by facilitating demos of the Fujitsu LifeBook® Motion C5 Mobile Clinical Assistant and the Panasonic Toughbook® H1 Health Mobile Clinical Assistant. After reviewing each unit, Bates selected the Panasonic Toughbook H1 Health for its easy-to-use dual-touch screen functionality, hot-swappable batteries, lightweight, ergonomic design for easy mobility and ultra-mobile-rugged durability.

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CHALLENGE

Increase the efficiency of patient discharge processes by adopting a computer hardware technology solution that is compatible with the new EMR system, would improve documentation at the point of care and yield a strong ROI for the hospital.

SOLUTION

The fully-rugged Panasonic Toughbook H1 Health Mobile Clinical Assistant was deployed as part of the hospital's EMR solution.

RESULT

The Toughbook H1 Health provided Bates County Hospital nurses immediate access to medical records and documentation of patient authorization at the point of care. The compatibility of the Toughbook H1 Health to the hospital's existing EMR system helped Bates Memorial Hospital to maximize its return on investment.

In an emergency room environment where the focus is on saving lives, Bates needed a computer it could rely on to perform regardless of the rough handling it received. After an extensive review of competitive product warranty offerings—something Bates viewed as an indication of the manufacturer's commitment to quality—the hospital found the Panasonic Toughbook® H1 Health warranty to be far superior.

For Bates, the critical step in its overall EMR solution deployment was to make certain that the new software and hardware were compatible. The MedGenix and NextGen EMR software had a seamless integration with the Windows-based Toughbook H1 Health, which saved the facility precious time, money and staff resources.

When implementing the Toughbook H1 Health as its EMR solution, one goal Bates wanted to accomplish was to increase the efficiency of the patient discharge process. Bates needed a device that could capture patients' signatures electronically, and the dual-touch screen

for this application. Compared to the hospital's previous pen-and-paper method, where nurses had to manually scan and download each signature into the system, the Toughbook H1 Health was able to store the signatures digitally, significantly increasing productivity and efficiency. The new solution helped to assure that patient signatures and authorizations were not being lost during the discharge process.

Additionally, with more than 8,000 patients visiting the emergency department annually, it was also critical that the Toughbook H1 Health would help enhance the efficiency of clinical workflow. The integrated barcode scanner in the Toughbook H1 Health was the perfect application for the hospital's emerging medication administration program. Additionally, Bates was able to utilize the embedded camera for its wound management practice. These integrated features streamlined clinical tasks, since they allowed nurses to more efficiently document a patient's condition at the point of care. From an IT management perspective, the

Toughbook H1 Health integrated features including RFID reader, 2MP camera, full-resolution fingerprint reader and contactless SmartCard reader achieved economies. Optional GPS, 2D barcode reader and Gobi™ mobile broadband were additional benefits that helped the hospital streamline inventory of IT equipment and conserve financial resources.

While using the Toughbook H1 Health to complete daily clinical tasks such as capturing vital signs, entering patient information and administering medication proved to be more efficient than the previous pen-and-paper approach, the hospital wanted to ensure that carrying the device would not be cumbersome or disruptive to the clinicians' workflow. The Toughbook H1 Health's lightweight, ergonomic design with integrated carrying handle made it highly portable for clinicians to carry during rounds. The device helped to make the transition to an EMR system more organic since it enhanced workflow.

To further enhance the clinicians' comfort level and experience with the new EMR system, the IT staff at Bates docked the Toughbook H1 Healths onto mobile carts, giving clinicians access to a mouse, full-size keyboard and large monitor.

Implementing the Toughbook H1 Health as part of its EMR solution has significantly streamlined the workload of Bates clinicians by providing immediate access to medical records and documentation of patient authorization at the point of care. Also, the Toughbook H1 Health's flawless compatibility with its EMR software system, the device's durability, usability and excellent warranty, helped Bates maximize its return on investment. Bates has deployed more than 45 H1 Healths throughout its facility.

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