



Flagler Improves Caregiver Workflows with Proximity-based Messaging

Challenge

Flagler Hospital in St. Augustine, Florida, is a 335-bed acute care facility. It is ranked among the top 5% of U.S. hospitals to achieve clinical and patient safety excellence. In order to offer the very best care, Flagler adopts innovative technology solutions that streamline patient-related administrative workflows, so that patient experience is continually improved. When Flagler Hospital investigated adopting a clinical-grade communications solution to improve patient care coordination in their behavioral health unit, their priority was a solution that could elicit the fastest possible response time to caregivers' requests for assistance. After much research, Flagler Hospital determined that knowing the proximity of a caregiver to a patient or other staff member was critical in reducing response times and removing workflow bottlenecks that impacted patient wait times, perception and experience. Using real-time location technology with two-way and proximity-based messaging could help caregivers locate staff and communicate wirelessly while on the go.



Ekahau B4 badge tag is the only active radio frequency identification (RFID) badge with a text message display.

Solution

Flagler Hospital chose the Ekahau Real-Time Location System (RTLS), which includes messaging software and offers the only active radio frequency identification (RFID) badge with a text message display. Flagler staff members wear Ekahau badge tags on a lanyard alongside their ID badge and when they require assistance from a colleague, they press one of the two buttons on the badge tag to send a text request to those closest to them. Ekahau software uses that request for assistance and routes it based on proximity to those who are qualified and close by—the system comes with built-in location logic ensuring a faster response since people who are closest can help more quickly than those who are further away. Those nearby are notified via their Ekahau badge tag's LED screen, which displays a text message such as "Nurse K. room 33, transport request." All Ekahau badge tags also come with a pull-down safety switch, which acts as a personal panic alarm in cases of staff duress, helping caregivers feel safe knowing they are visible if help is needed.

This added layer of location information helps expedite a response and close the request. By limiting the message to staff members who are both qualified and close by, Flagler's Behavioral Health department also streamlines caregiver workflows and improves care coordination and operations, on a daily basis. Lastly, by minimizing unnecessary messaging to an entire blanket group, alarm fatigue is also minimized so that system precision and efficiency are improved over standalone VoIP phones and pagers.

“There's no waiting.
There's no explaining.
You're not going to lose
precious seconds trying
to justify why you need
help. Help's just going to
come.”

-Nampa Police Chief
Craig Kingsbury



Results

Flagler Hospital chose the Ekahau location-based messaging solution because it operates over the existing Wi-Fi network, but does not require dedicated infrastructure, like many real-time location solutions. Unlike pagers, the solution also offers a pull-down panic switch for cases of staff duress, the ability to summon those close by, and search for staff on virtual, web-based maps. With Ekahau's web-based software maps, hospital administrators can view past events to gain insights into response times, and improve future workflows.

Using Ekahau RTLS, Flagler is streamlining workflows and communications between caregivers, wirelessly, without causing alarm fatigue or the disruptive noise often produced by pagers. By messaging those who are near them, busy caregivers can spend less time securing help and more time with patients.

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