

# Naval Medical Center Portsmouth

**Naval Medical Center Portsmouth puts patient information at physicians' fingertips, saving time and reducing the chance of errors**

## Industry

- Healthcare

## Application

- Physician Information Lookup

## Solution Highlights

- Application developed in-house using shareware, freeware, and off-the-shelf software
- Database file on each patient replaces hand-written index cards, reducing possibility of errors
- Remote access to frequently used resources improves efficiency
- Streamlined sharing of patient information improves quality of care

***Physicians at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth use Palm™ III handhelds to maintain patient files and access reference materials, pager numbers and notes from the care team. Now, doctors can easily beam or synchronize patients' complete medical histories and instructions to the overnight staff, giving them simple, mobile access to everything they need to know about their patients, from allergies to recent medical procedures.***

## About Naval Medical Center Portsmouth

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth is the oldest continuously running hospital in the United States Navy, delivering state-of-the-art healthcare to sailors and their families since 1830. To continue its tradition of excellence, the medical center must provide physicians with the information they need to effectively care for patients.

## The Challenge

Until recently, physicians at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth kept track of patients by recording medical information, patient histories and to-do lists on index cards. "When someone called for a phone consultation," says Dr. Brian N. Bowes, Brian N. Bowes, M.D., Staff Internist, "those chicken-scratched index cards often left us without a lot of information, and we had to go to the file room to fill in the gaps."

In addition, preparing for the daily changeover to the overnight shift—when one doctor is responsible for as many as 40 patients—could be overwhelming. The physician on duty often had only a few hurried minutes to consult with the daytime care team and jot down notes.

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth needed to find a more effective way for physicians to communicate complex patient data and instructions and give both daytime and overnight physicians better access to information. "'Adequate' worked for years," said Bowes, "but the idea was to make both the process and quality better."

*"We wanted to take the process from a 'manageable' state to an incredibly thorough one, and make the system even better than was thought possible."*

— Brian N. Bowes, M.D.  
Staff Internist NMCL Quantico, Virginia



## The Palm Handheld Solution

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth developed an application that runs on Palm™ III handhelds and is synchronized with Windows NT servers. The application gives physicians an easy-to-reference format for maintaining patient files, saving time and reducing the chance of errors associated with handwritten notes. The Palm solution also gives physicians access to reference materials, medical algorithms, flow sheets, frequently used pager numbers and notes from the care team.

The handhelds streamline the process of preparing for the overnight shift. Now, doctors can easily beam or synchronize patients' complete medical histories and instructions to the overnight staff, giving them simple, mobile access to everything they need to know about their patients, from allergies to recent medical procedures.

## Future Plans

Eventually, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth would like to develop a wireless network that will query a central database every night and synchronize the next day's patient list. "Ideally, doctors could come in to find a list of all the current medicines, lab values, allergies, tests and pending problems loaded on their Palm handheld," said Bowes.

## Close

The Palm solution gives Naval Medical Center Portsmouth physicians mobile access to comprehensive medical information. With this powerful tool, physicians no longer rely on handwritten index cards for patient data, improving efficiency and reducing the possibility for error. By giving physicians the information they need to be more effective, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth is ensuring that its 170-year tradition of excellence will continue.

More information about the use of Palm Powered™ handhelds for enterprise solutions is available at:

**[www.palm.com/enterprise/studies](http://www.palm.com/enterprise/studies).**

### **Palm, Inc.**

5470 Great America Parkway  
Santa Clara, CA 95054  
[www.palm.com/enterprise](http://www.palm.com/enterprise)

