

# BANNER HEALTH



## THE CHALLENGE

A hospital's tiniest patients have unique needs, especially when it comes to communication. How do you make sure that families stay informed minute-by-minute when their baby is in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)? The key is an efficient communications infrastructure, anchored by a smoothly functioning contact center.

As the heart of a major medical system, Banner Health's centralized contact center is a busy place. It currently handles 4.2 million calls a year. It also manages emergency notifications 24 hours a day, including code blue, code pink, and code triage.

In 2014, staff members began looking for ways to improve communication efficiency. Across various areas of the hospitals there were inconsistent procedures, rising costs, and a cumbersome code alert process—all of which affected patient care.

"Staff were using manual processes for our code blues. Nurses were sometimes having to leave a patient in order to make a call to the operator to launch a code," said Cippy Seidler, call center director. Once the call came in, operators would have to write down the information and then initiate an overhead page. Staff lost valuable minutes going through all these steps.

The Banner Health team searched for clinical alerting options to enhance communications among staff, particularly in time-sensitive situations. A long-time Spok customer for contact center solutions, the organization already relied on various elements of the Spok Care Connect® suite in its consolidated contact center. They decided to take a look at Spok's critical alerting solution.

## OVERVIEW

Headquartered in Phoenix, Banner Health is one of the largest nonprofit healthcare systems in the country. The system manages 25 acute-care hospitals, the Banner Health Network and Banner Medical Group, three academic medical centers, long-term care centers, outpatient surgery centers, and an array of other services including family clinics, home care and hospice services, and a nursing registry. Banner Health is in seven states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada, and Wyoming.

## INDUSTRY

Healthcare

## BUSINESS DRIVERS

- Increase quality of patient care
- Simplify critical code process
- Improve experience for patients' families

## SOLUTION

- Spok® Messenger clinical alerting

## RESULTS

- Reduced time needed to launch a critical code
- Improved NICU nurse response time to critical changes in babies' vital signs
- Strengthened relationships with NICU family members





“Spok solutions have really made a difference in patient care at Banner Health. That reduction of time in calling a critical code is significant. It really makes a difference in the lives of our patients.”

Cippy Seidler  
Call Center Director



## THE SOLUTION

Staff found that the Spok clinical alerting solution could be easily integrated with their existing platform as well as their nurse call system. It had the capability to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of how clinicians and the contact center worked together for critical codes.

“Once we got the Spok solution, we could launch codes electronically. Nurses push a button at the bedside, and the operators instantly have all of the information they need: not only that it’s a code blue, but also what facility, what room it’s in, and any other detailed information they need to alert the right people to respond,” said Seidler.

When the initial rollout was a success, Banner expanded the solution to the NICU to manage alerts from baby monitoring systems. As soon as the system detects changes in vital signs, it automatically sends an alert message to the assigned nurse’s voice badge. If the nurse cannot respond immediately, Spok handles the escalation by alerting the next-available nurse. “We no longer need to physically monitor changes in vitals,” said Jennifer Fil, RN manager in the NICU. “The messaging is all automated.”

And calls from parents can be routed directly to a nurse’s voice badge, allowing family members to get up-to-the-minute progress reports on the tiny patients. “Spok has helped us improve patient care by allowing us to communicate easily with families,” said Fil. “The infant monitor is attached to our voice badge, so even if we are out of the room we are always in communication with the babies. And if a nurse is feeding a baby, a call can be connected directly to that person’s voice badge, and they are able to talk to the parent and let them know what is going on.”

## THE RESULTS

The speed and accuracy of code calling has improved as well as overall critical communication processes. Most importantly, Banner has elevated the level of patient care.

“Spok solutions have really made a difference in patient care at Banner Health. That reduction of time in calling a critical code is significant. It really makes a difference in the lives of our patients,” said Seidler.