HOSPITAL FOR SPECIAL SURGERY
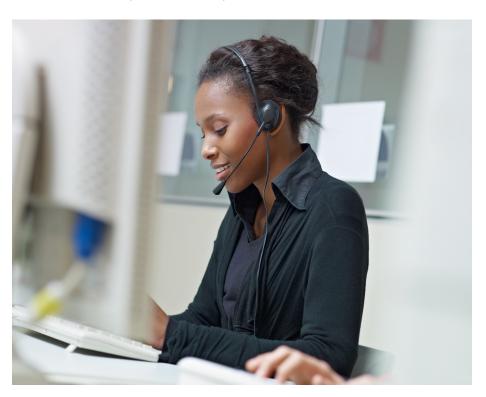
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THE CHALLENGE

When Hurricane Sandy hit New York City in 2012, the severity of the storm tested the city's critical infrastructure, including many area hospitals.

Located near the East River, literally right over water, Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) was especially vulnerable. "Just after the storm, our basement area was only a few feet away from the river coming into the hospital," said Jason Vanrell, director of technical operations for HSS.

This was cause for great concern: The basement housed the hospital's communication headquarters, including the operator bank and the building alarm system. Keeping these operational at all times was essential to support staff's ability to coordinate patient care and maintain safety for everyone in the facility.

"There was a single alarm panel in the basement monitoring multiple systems, including gas and fire. It required operators to get up from their station and walk over to identify the alarm and then look up the right person to page," said Vanrell. "If flood waters had made that area inaccessible, many of our vital systems would have been inoperable."

Staff knew they needed to find a way to make their communication systems more portable and flexible. To be ready for the next emergency, they had to be able to monitor alarms and run other operations remotely at a moment's notice.

OVERVIEW

Hospital for Special Surgery is America's longest established orthopedic hospital (est. 1863) and the world's largest academic medical center dedicated exclusively to orthopedics, rheumatology, and related specialties. Located in New York City, the 205-bed hospital performs more than 29,000 surgical procedures annually and has been top-ranked in orthopedics and rheumatology for the past 25 years. HSS treats patients from all over the world, including professional athletes and members of the U.S. Olympic team.

INDUSTRY

Healthcare

BUSINESS DRIVERS

- Improve effectiveness of alarm management
- Increase flexibility and efficiency of communication system
- Enhance emergency preparedness

SOLUTION

Spok Care Connect®

RESULTS

- Improved response time to critical alarms
- Increased the adaptability of the contact center
- Enhanced communication throughout organization

> "There are 12 different alarm systems that are now feeding into our operator consoles, including medical, gas, and fire. We don't have to monitor a single panel in the basement anymore; the Spok solution can deliver alerts to the main console and then page the department or individual needed for a particular alarm."

Jason Vanrell
Director of Technical Operations

THE SOLUTION

The Spok Care Connect® operator console and clinical alerting solutions provided the answer: Operators can now do their jobs from any location using a streamlined process that puts all the information needed at their fingertips. Calls can be handled with just a few keystrokes, and all alarms can be monitored and responded to quickly and easily from any location.

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Operators can now log in at a number of different work stations to take phone calls and respond to alarms. The next phase includes plans to allow operators to work from home in case of weather situations such as snow storms. "Bringing people in at all hours, including in the middle of the night, can be difficult. If we can set it up so they can work remotely it would make a big difference for our contact center," said Vanrell.

THE FUTURE

HSS plans to utilize additional elements of the Spok Care Connect platform in the future. "What sold us is that we knew we could do a lot of other things with Spok," said Vanrell. "The platform can support our needs as we work to integrate different systems and continue to innovate."

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