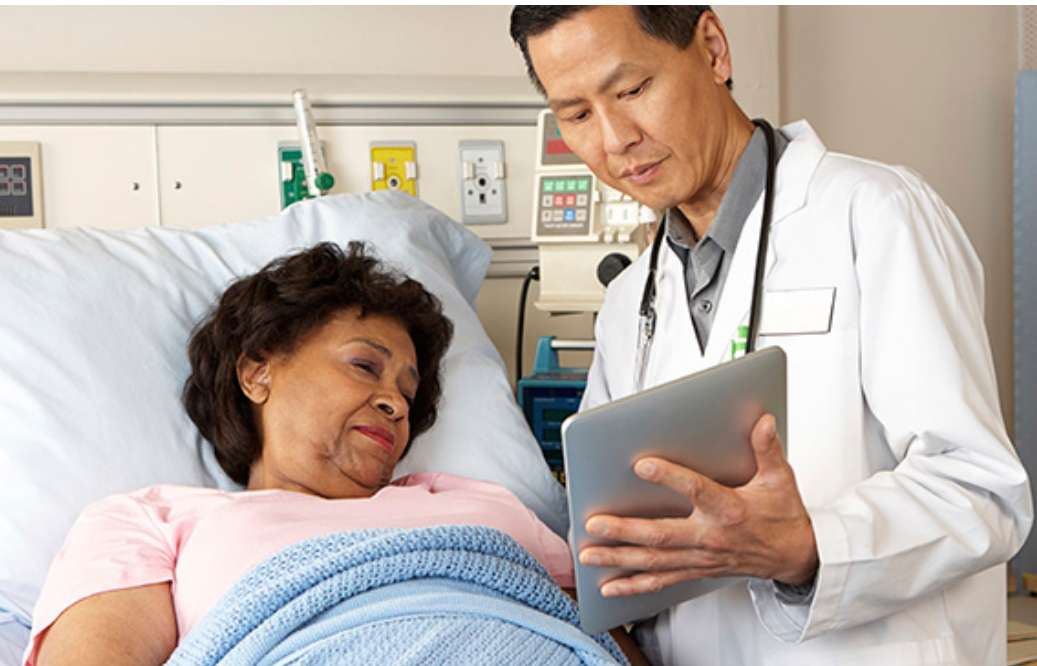# MUNSON MEDICAL CENTER

THE CHALLENGE

Munson Medical Center has come a long way from its beginnings in 1915, when patients were cared for in a 21-bed, donated boarding house. Since that time, it's grown into a nationally recognized, 391-bed regional referral center, part of a network of hospitals with more than 7,000 employees.

Dramatic growth in recent years has created some tricky challenges. The switchboard in particular has been at the forefront of Munson Medical Center's expansion. What started as a small group serving just one facility is now a 14-person team supporting a nine-hospital network that includes 100 physician offices. The main database for all phone numbers and pagers is centralized at Munson Medical Center, and the switchboard team currently handles more than 1.7 million calls annually. With the addition of three more hospitals in 2016, the call volume is projected to be more than 1.8 million.

"We provide after-hours services to every physician practice in the area, so our switchboard is heavily used," said Mary Klein, IT customer support manager.

As recently as just a few years ago, staff members were juggling inefficient manual systems to find contact information and locate on-call physicians. "Each operator had to create their own phone and pager lists, and manually enter the information for every person," said Klein.

Finding staff quickly was a challenge. Physicians were hard to reach in certain areas of the hospital and patient safety was a concern. "We needed a better way to notify people quickly and know who responded," explained Klein.

OVERVIEW

Munson Medical Center in Traverse City, Mich., is a regional referral center serving patients in 32 counties. Honored 14 times in Truven Health Analytics' 100 Top Hospitals® program, it is nationally recognized for superior quality care and operational performance. The largest of nine Munson Healthcare system hospitals, it has the only Level II Trauma Center and Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in northern Michigan, and has been designated as a Primary Stroke Center by The Joint Commission.

INDUSTRY

Healthcare

BUSINESS DRIVERS

- Maintain a high level of patient care while handling increased call volume
- Enhance efficiency and automation in the switchboard to improve the customer and operator experience
- Speed and optimize response to trauma situations and other critical events
- Send alert details to both individuals and groups

SOLUTION

- Spok® solutions for emergency notification, operator console, on-call scheduling, web directory, and secure texting

RESULTS

- Improved patient care with dramatically faster response time to critical events
- Provided stronger switchboard service to an increasing number of callers while maintaining existing staffing levels
- Flexibility to meet evolving communication needs as organization grows

> "First responders en route to the hospital can now trigger a code STEMI (ST-elevated myocardial infarction), and the OR is already set up and ready when the patient hits the door."

Mary Klein
IT Customer Support Manager

THE SOLUTION

Switchboard staff members realized they needed to make some changes. Call and paging volumes were rising, and demands from clinics and physicians were becoming more complex. They needed to help maintain a high level of patient care while managing growing responsibilities and workloads.

Exploring ways to strengthen their communication systems, Munson Medical Center switchboard staff approached Spok about options for achieving efficiency, flexibility, and patient-centric communications via an integrated solution suite. Among the requirements were ease of use and automation for many of their most important functions, from launching codes, to contacting key teams, to communicating with patients and their families. Ongoing education and support were also important considerations as staff adjusted to evolving demands. Munson Medical Center ultimately selected Spok® solutions for emergency notification, operator consoles, web-based directory, on-call scheduling, and secure texting.

THE RESULTS

Since implementing the new solutions, efficiency improvements have allowed the switchboard to handle the annual call volume as it grew to 1.7 million (from just under 1 million), and paging messages that increased from 3 million to 4 million, all without adding full-time employees. Paging skyrocketed after implementation of Spok solutions, which allows for more self-service options such as interfacing with the electronic medical record (EMR).

"It's amazing the amount of information we can put into that database and then get it out so fast—it's so much easier. We just type in a physician's name and all the information is right there," said Klein.

Perhaps the most striking change has been in emergency response. "We used to have someone texting on a cell phone to reach Emergency Department staff; they used to spend hours on the phone. Now one single message goes out to everybody," Klein said. An additional benefit is that calls and responses are now tracked and archived.

"All codes, with the exception of fire, come through our switchboard. First responders en route to the hospital can now trigger a code STEMI (ST-elevated myocardial infarction), and the OR is already set up and ready when the patient hits the door," she added.

Staff satisfaction is another benefit, according to Klein. "Physicians really love the mobile solution—they can receive email, texts, and pages all on one device, and communications are simpler and faster."

Further customization has resulted in even more efficiencies. In response to physician and nurse requests to streamline the process for coordinating care, IT staff programmed a rule directly in the EMR system that triggers a page (to pre-defined groups or individuals) and eliminates the need to call the switchboard. This task used to require several steps and has now been automated, saving staff time and most importantly, serving patients better.

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