

# ROSWELL PARK CANCER INSTITUTE

## THE CHALLENGE

During a hospital expansion project in 2011, construction challenges caused disruptions and delays to the critical communication solution being used by Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI). The institute began searching for a new option to ensure providers and staff could exchange critical messages quickly for efficient patient care coordination.

## THE SOLUTION

RPCI decided that instead of taking incremental steps toward new communication technologies and progressing slowly, they would take a major leap to smartphones and take advantage of the latest technology available. This was at a time when individual users were just starting to move away from cell phones to smartphones.

“One of our requirements was that our new communication solution had to be multi-functional to justify the cost of the investment,” said Colleen Sarick, director of enterprise communications at RPCI. “Whatever we chose had to be worth it for our finance team as well as our end users, so we wanted something that would have the flexibility to support paging, email, text messaging, medical apps, the Internet, and the ability to use the phone to call people.”

RPCI was able to work with their cellular data carrier for a discount on smartphones, as well as assistance with the cellular coverage throughout the campus. “We were very proactive with coverage. Our cellular provider swept the campus for dead zones and installed an antennae system to make sure we had a saturated cellular network. At the same time, we overhauled the Wi-Fi network to ensure coverage for that, too.”

With the devices and coverage in place, the next step was to assure that clinicians could communicate with one another clearly, quickly, and securely. RPCI selected Spok Mobile® to solve that challenge. “We selected Spok’s secure texting app because of the integration options with our existing directory services and on-call scheduling software. Adding mobile messaging meant that staff could find one another quickly in the directory, as well as send and receive secure messages, right from the app.”



## OVERVIEW

Located in Buffalo, N.Y., Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI) was founded in 1898 as the nation’s first cancer center. A Leapfrog Group Hospital with 133 beds and more than 3,500 employees, RPCI holds the National Cancer Institute’s designation of “Comprehensive Cancer Center,” one of only 41 in the country. RPCI is a teaching hospital that emphasizes both clinical care and research, with the continuing mission to understand, prevent, and cure cancer.

## INDUSTRY

Healthcare

## BUSINESS DRIVERS

- Support patient safety via a new provider communication solution
- Coordinate care more easily via secure texting

## SOLUTION

- Spok Mobile® secure texting app integrated with the existing directory, console, and on-call scheduling solutions

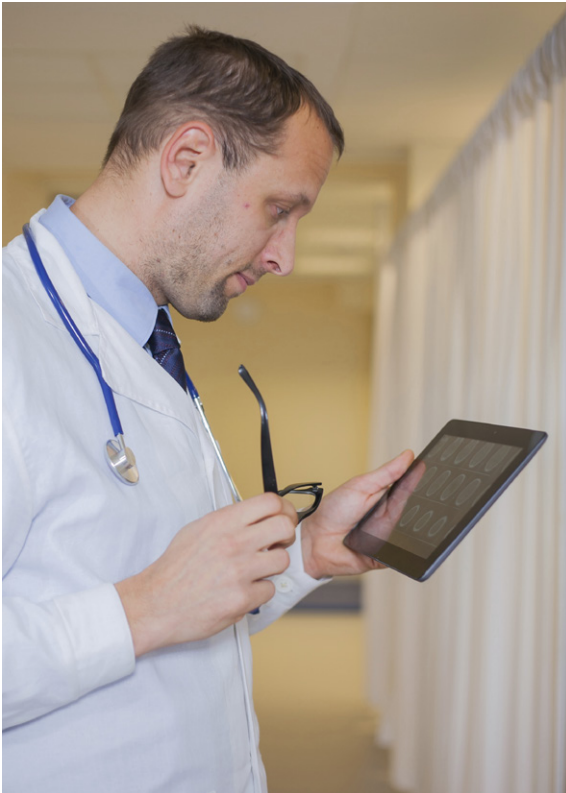
## RESULTS

- Staff can include patient details in encrypted text messages for enhanced patient care
- Providers can quickly and easily find the right on-call colleague to contact, saving time



“Staff found that they have so much more accessibility now. Having mobile access to the directory and on-call schedules is convenient... and has been an important investment in enhancing our clinical communication and patient care coordination.”

Colleen Sarick  
Director of Enterprise Communications at RPCI



## THE ROLLOUT

RPCI's giant leap to embrace the new solution on smartphones was a very calculated one, with trial runs in select areas. Both clinical and ancillary services users were chosen to participate in testing. "I knew hospitalists would be our heavy-hitter pilot group, and since they get paged all day they would be excellent candidates for testing the robustness of the solution," said Sarick. "And our clinical research team also receives pages, but very infrequently. I wanted to test both ends of the clinical spectrum for possible challenges. We also included housekeeping because they are in constant contact with each other and we knew they would really push the messaging capabilities."

To help on costs, housekeeping staff were given smartphones with no cellular service, only data plans for texting and Internet connectivity. Hospitalists were given fully functional smartphones.

After the trials, RPCI prepared for a full rollout. This began with department audits for usage. "We discovered some staff didn't need smartphones at all, while in other places we could give certain staff devices that they hand off to the next person at the end of each shift," said Sarick. "And I highly encourage people to bring their own device in if it meets our security requirements. We're a mix of hospital-issued and BYOD devices."

Once it was time to deliver smartphones and Spok Mobile throughout the organization, Sarick's team booked a conference room and told each department which day to come down to receive a device or the app and relevant training. "We coordinated the rollout to prevent a mass frenzy. A week before handing out each device, it was assigned to a user or user group. Then we handed out devices and immediately sent users into a class to teach them how to use the phone itself, and how to use the Spok Mobile app."

## RESULTS

Clinical staff appreciate the ability to access email, their medical apps, and the Internet, all while mobile within the hospital. And Sarick says the app has also worked very well for messaging. "Staff found that they have so much more accessibility now. Having mobile access to the directory and on-call schedules is convenient as well as a time saver. And people really like the ability to text securely and include as much information as they need. That has been a big hit with our users, and has been an important investment in enhancing our clinical communication and patient care coordination."