

YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH



THE CHALLENGE

Steve Tortora, manager of call centers at Yale New Haven Health, struggled to find a reliable emergency notification system that would allow him to send mass emergency notifications to all health system employees. "Our biggest challenge is sending messages to large, dynamic groups," explains Tortora. "In the past, we tried sending messages to a group of over 1,000 employees, which never worked as we hoped and took 30 minutes." The call centers needed an easy-to-use, cost-effective solution that provided a way to send mass emergency notifications.

THE SOLUTION

Yale New Haven Health implemented Spok emergency notifications (Spok® e.Notify) to allow the call center team to send critical information quickly and reliably on any type of communication device. Spok emergency notifications allows operators to quickly alert staff during emergency situations, speeding the coordination of safety efforts when time matters. Instead of calling trees and confusion, operators can focus their efforts elsewhere—simplifying their emergency notification workflow. "With a platform like Spok Care Connect®, we've built a unified contact center that allows our operators to do more than just answer and forward calls—we're streamlining processes and responding faster," says Jim Weeks, vice president of information services.

Operators have been issuing notifications to small groups, such as cath labs and stroke activations for close to four years using Spok e.Notify, and are now averaging about 15 activations daily. "Our operators love it," Tortora remarks. "They know who to notify and can easily monitor and escalate if needed." For Tortora the real benefit will come from an expanded use of emergency notifications to large, dynamic groups.

THE RESULTS

In a test, Yale New Haven Health issued an emergency notification to all 20,000+ employees. The message reached everyone within eight minutes. With Spok e.Notify in place, they reduced emergency notification by 22 minutes, a 73 percent decrease from previous notifications. What's more, the notification was sent to all employees, whereas previous notifications could only be sent to groups of no more than 1,000. "It really did work!" says Tortora about the all-employee test.



22 MINUTES

saved when executing emergency notification to >20,000 employees

OVERVIEW

Yale New Haven Health is the largest acute care provider in southern Connecticut. Combined, the affiliated organizations comprise over 2,500 total licensed beds, with 114,000 inpatient discharges and 1.9 million outpatient encounters annually. It is the primary teaching hospital for Yale School of Medicine and Yale School of Nursing.

Yale New Haven Health is nationally ranked among the best hospitals in the United States, according to U.S. News and World Report, and provides family-focused care in more than 100 medical specialties.

INDUSTRY

Healthcare

BUSINESS DRIVERS

- Support secure, reliable communications at multiple locations
- Notify multiple departments simultaneously to emergency situations and other critical events

SOLUTION

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

RESULTS

- Successfully sent emergency notification to over 20,000 employees within eight minutes
- Reduced time issuing emergency notification alerts by 22 minutes (a 73 percent reduction)
- Increased operator efficiency with standardized console setup

TIMELINE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION TO ALL YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH EMPLOYEES



THE FUTURE

“Our ability to achieve these results is dependent upon the ability of our communication technology to integrate and scale to support our needs,” says Weeks. “Spok solutions are incredibly flexible, allowing us to innovate in ways that leverage our existing investments and achieve our business goals.”

Tortora adds, “There is a lot of excitement about what we’re doing, especially from our Emergency Preparedness Program Manager, who is thrilled with our enhanced emergency response communication capabilities.”

Yale New Haven Health is continuing to prepare its notifications for emergency planning purposes, while expanding call center operations. Additional consoles are being implemented at other locations, and they’re continually working to ensure staff utilize the directory as the “single source of truth” and keep their information up to date.

TAKING CALL CENTER OPERATIONS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Yale New Haven Health depends on Spok call center solutions to increase productivity and automate important operator functions. With a central online directory and on-call scheduling, operators at Yale New Haven Health have everything they need right at their fingertips. In fact, the web directory is used by everyone at the organization, with access linked on the homepage of its Epic® EHR and on its intranet.

Following the acquisition of the Hospital of Saint Raphael in 2012, Yale New Haven Health standardized call center technologies to support many different locations. They have increased efficiency by making each smart console setup identical. “Operators are trained to perform their tasks using this standardized setup, allowing them to easily transfer to another workstation or even a different location with no downtime to learn new processes,” explains Weeks.

Using Spok operator console, on-call scheduling, and web directory, Yale New Haven Health has reduced operator confusion and redundant efforts, while creating better experiences for patients, care teams, and operators.



“Spok offers an array of integrated solutions as part of their platform. It made sense for us to add emergency notifications to our existing Spok web-based directory, on-call scheduling, speech recognition, and operator console.”

Jim Weeks
Vice President of Information Services