

WHO'S ON CALL?

Reaching the right physician when seconds count



Poor on-call scheduling systems can adversely affect patient care

With the prevalence of smartphones and pagers in healthcare, reaching the right physician for consultations and questions ought to be easy. But the reality is that finding the right clinician, especially one on call, is still a challenge because these schedules are complex and constantly changing. Communication-driven workflows break down when on-call schedules are out of date, difficult to maintain, or exist separately from staff directories. Likewise, digital spreadsheets may have multiple versions with conflicting information, and paper copies become outdated as soon as they're printed.

At best, a manual approach to scheduling is inefficient. At worst, it can adversely affect patient care. If urgent requests or critical test results are sent to the wrong physician because contact information is incorrect, the result is a potential delay in treatment that could result in patient harm. In fact, The Doctors Group found [communication failures played a role in 27% of medical malpractice claims](#). CRICO discovered [communication issues were a factor in 1,744 deaths](#) over a four-year period, costing hospitals \$1.7 billion.

Similarly, the [2020 State of Healthcare Communication Survey](#) asked respondents whether their organization discovered any hospital-wide communication gaps during the COVID-19 pandemic; 22% noted the inability to communicate effectively. It's clear that communication must be addressed as hospitals and health systems strive for more efficient workflows that elevate patient care.

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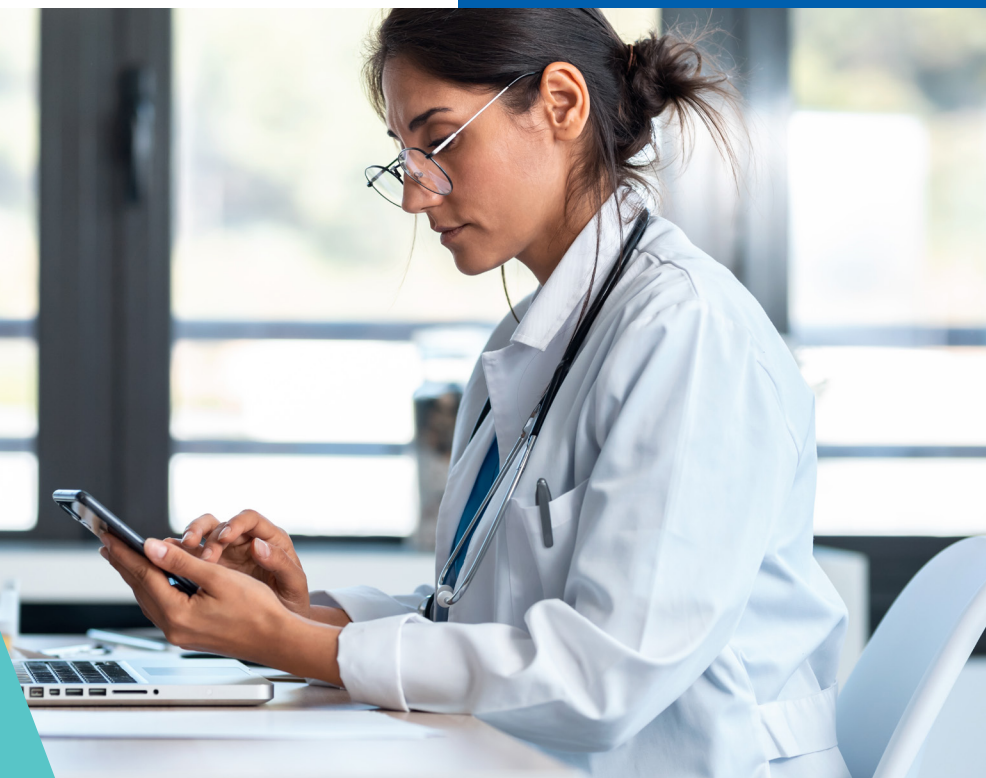
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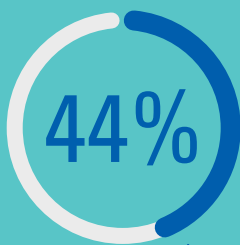




The role of integrated systems in solving communication deficiencies

The solution to this problem is two part. The first component is having a single, web-based solution to house organization-wide on-call schedules that all authorized staff can easily access and update. But this is just one piece of the broader communication puzzle. The second component is having accurate directory information that integrates directly with the on-call schedule as well as with related tools such as secure messaging and clinical alerting.

This type of system is often called a clinical communication and collaboration (CC&C) platform, which connects physicians, nurses, and other care team members with the people and hospital systems they rely on to provide patient care. It's a consolidated software application that's rapidly gaining popularity for its ability to optimize how care teams interact. A recent [Spyglass Consulting study](#) reported that CC&C platforms were a high-priority investment for 73% of the hospitals surveyed, an increase of 18% over 2018 findings.



Had yet to
implement on-call
scheduling software

On-call scheduling adoption trends

When it comes to on-call scheduling software, the [2019 Contact Centers in Healthcare Report](#) found that 44% of survey participants had yet to implement this type of solution either on its own or as part of a broader platform. If this represents your organization, you may be struggling to support the fully interconnected communication required to keep up with the fast pace of healthcare today, especially in light of the demands of COVID-19. Even hospitals with some form of on-call scheduling software in place may not have a fully integrated system that supports broader workflows. Let's take a look at the key considerations for improving how care teams reach physicians and other on-call clinicians around the clock.

Beyond just managing on-call schedules

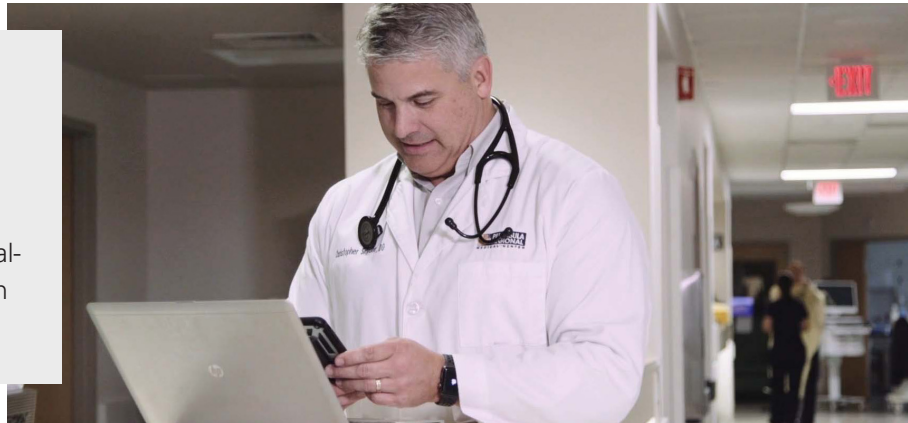
Keeping it current

Changes made to a hospital-wide, web-based schedule should be immediately available to the organization, without the need to print and distribute revisions to all departments. Web-based on-call scheduling means there is a single source for the latest information, eliminating version control confusion and transcription errors that arise from copying information onto paper or white boards — or even from sending electronic spreadsheets. Clinical departments and even clinicians themselves can take ownership of updates and make revisions as assignments change, helping keep schedules more current. It also saves time for contact center staff by removing them from the update process and allowing them to spend more time on providing caller service.

CASE STUDY

TidalHealth Peninsula Regional

[Explore how](#) all care team members can access accurate contact information and real-time on-call schedules to communicate with colleagues via their preferred device.



Saving time

Clinicians, contact center agents, and any other authorized staff can easily access web-based on-call schedules via smartphones or desktop computers.

- Easy access to schedules and contact information for the right provider means urgent messages get where they need to go quickly. No time is lost waiting for a response from the wrong person.
- Quick access to information cuts wasted search time for nurses and physicians who need to find out who is on call and how to reach that person. Also, once the correct clinician is located, the best solutions allow a message to be sent right from the directory.
- Robust solutions enable doctors to input exceptions to forward their on-call automatically to another provider during specific days and times (for example, while in surgery).



CASE STUDY

[Discover how](#) UnityPoint Health-Meriter took control of their on-call schedules to save time and increase reliability, efficiency, and patient safety.

"Having the same information shared among the web directory, on-call scheduling, and operator console solutions has been seamless. It has made the operators' jobs easier, and communications are more efficient."

- Mac Stanford, Biomedical/Communication Services
North Mississippi Medical Center

CASE STUDY

[Learn how](#) North Mississippi Medical Center improved on-call information accuracy and added the ability to route pages directly to providers' smartphones.

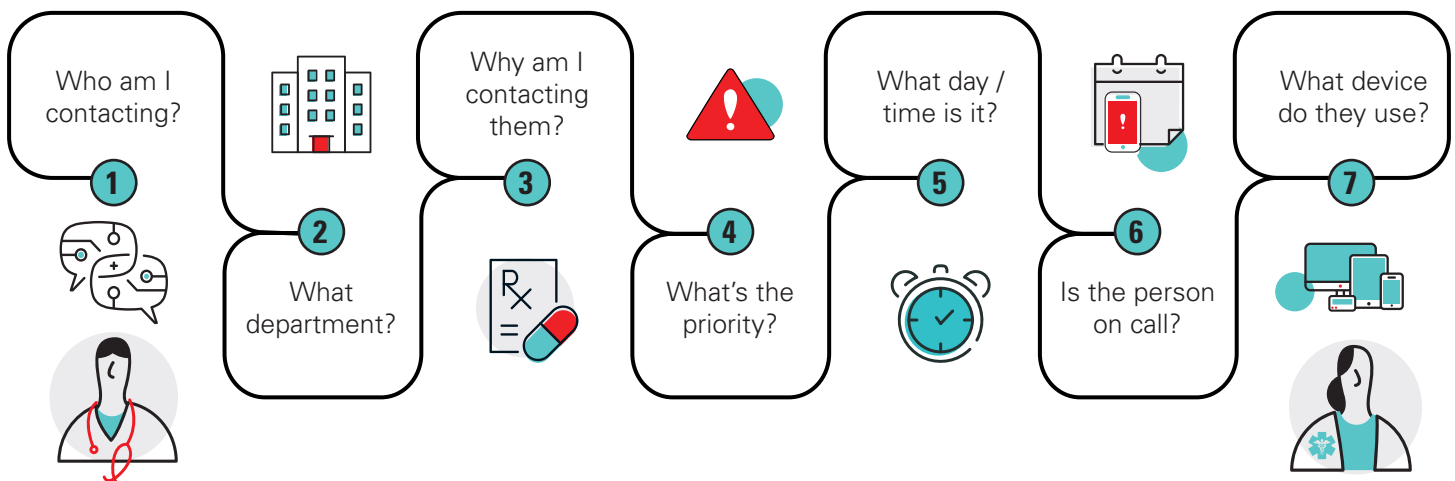
Improving provider communication for better patient care

With the complexity of schedules and diversity of mobile devices in hospitals today, advanced technology is a necessity to help manage contact information. The answer is an integrated communication platform that brings together the staff directory, web-based on-call schedules, secure messaging, and physician-specific information such as availability and device preference. The benefits of faster and more efficient communication will make care coordination easier for providers and safer for patients.



Connecting clinical teams the right way

Spok Care Connect® takes the guesswork out of what can otherwise be a lengthy communication decision-making process. It automatically incorporates each of the important decision factors to connect clinical teams with the people and information they need. Along the way, it reduces or even eliminates common roadblocks that hinder effectively coordinated care.





ABOUT SPOK, INC.

Spok, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Spok Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQ: SPOK), headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, is proud to be a global leader in healthcare communications. We deliver clinical information to care teams when and where it matters most to improve patient outcomes. Top hospitals rely on the Spok Care Connect® platform to enhance workflows for clinicians and support administrative compliance. Our customers send over 100 million messages each month through their Spok® solutions. When seconds count and patients' lives are at stake, Spok enables smarter, faster clinical communication.

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