



Community Health Network

Integrating systems to respond to patient requests faster

“Vocera technology gives us peace of mind knowing we’ve provided our care teams with a device that keeps our caregivers and patients connected and safe. Our care teams depend on the Vocera communication device to have the unique ability to connect quickly, with the push of a button. Without the Vocera solution, care teams would be shouting down hallways and struggling to find the person they need.”

– **Jean Putnam, DNP, MS, RN, CPHQ**

Executive Vice President and
Chief Nursing Officer
Community Health Network

“The Vocera technical support team was incredibly accommodating and helped us figure out how to send the MyChart Bedside alerts to Vocera communication devices. We wouldn’t have turned the feature on if the Vocera team had not been so willing to partner with us.”

– **Barb Miller, MSN, RN, ITIL**
Business Relationship Manager
Community Health Network

Relax with a warm blanket. Dim the lights to get some healing rest. Pull the curtain for more privacy. Understand what’s happening with your care and what’s going to happen next.

For patients and families, a hospital stay becomes more comfortable when they feel a sense of control over the immediate environment. They gain peace of mind when they can make sense of care-related information like medications, appointments, the care plan and more.

At Community Health Network (CHNw), providing the most comfortable and positive patient experience is at the forefront of the health system’s priorities. That’s why CHNw equips patients with a bedside solution – the Epic MyChart Bedside app on a tablet – that lets them easily communicate with their care team and be more involved in managing their own health.

Challenges

The Epic MyChart Bedside app allows patients to access and make sense of their medical data. The app also has an “I Would Like” section through which patients can request items such as a warm blanket or a fresh gown. The app is designed so that when a patient makes a request, it generates a flag in the Epic system.

It’s a terrific concept, but initially there was just one problem: The care team would receive no notification of the patient request. Team members would have to remember to manually log in the Epic dashboard to see patient requests. Patient request notifications could sit in the queue for extended periods before being seen.

Vocera Solution

True to CHNw’s core value of innovation, the health system devised a novel way to allow requests from MyChart Bedside to be sent directly to a patient’s care team. They did it by integrating the Epic app with their Vocera system.

Some hospitals within CHNw have used Vocera technology for over a decade to enable care teams to easily communicate. Wearing the hands-free Vocera communication device, colleagues connect simply by saying the name, role or group of whom they want to reach.

Now, when a patient makes a request in MyChart Bedside, the request goes directly to the appropriate care team member on their Vocera communication. The care team member instantly sees the patient request and can respond, with no need to log into the Epic dashboard.

The organization also integrated its nurse call system with the Vocera system to allow care teams to be highly responsive. In the past when a patient made a nurse-call request, a care team member would respond to the call light by walking to the console at the nurses’ station or to the patient’s room. Today when a patient makes a nurse-call request, the care team member is notified instantly on their Vocera communication device and can accept the request or call back directly to the patient’s bedside pillow speaker.

“Interoperability between our nurse call and Vocera systems enables caregivers to respond to our patient’s needs faster,” explained Deborah Lyons, DNP, RN, Network Community Integration Executive Director at CHNw. “It also simplifies our workflows, which improves care team members’ experience and wellbeing.”

In addition to transforming the patient and caregiver experience by integrating the Vocera solution with Epic MyChart Bedside and nurse call, CHNw is using Vocera technology to strengthen safety for patients and staff. If someone is in a dangerous situation, whether a patient is at risk of falling or a staff member is faced with an agitated patient, it's easy to summon help.

Results*

When CHNw began integrating MyChart Bedside with its Vocera solution, the health system quickly saw an improvement in patient care and in the patient and staff experience. HCAHPS scores related to "responsiveness of staff" improved 9.7% – an increase from 67 to 73.5. HCAHPS scores related to "communication with nurses" improved 6.0% – jumping from 79.7 to 84.5.

"Through the successful integration with our Vocera system, we have been able to enhance the functionality of MyChart Bedside, giving our patients quick access to their healthcare team while supporting a more efficient caregiver workflow," said Sean Kennedy, MBA, BSN, RN, CEN, Vice President of Operations at Community Hospital East. "Our caregivers save valuable time and steps because they know what their patient needs before entering the patient's room."

"The Vocera technical support team was incredibly accommodating and helped us figure out how to send the MyChart Bedside alerts to Vocera communication devices," said Barb Miller, MSN, RN, ITIL, Business Relationship Manager at Community Howard Regional Health. "We wouldn't have turned the feature on if the Vocera team had not been so willing to partner with us."

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– **Deborah Lyons, DNP, RN**

Network Community Integration
Executive Director
Community Health Network

*In addition to Vocera technology, the facility's results may reflect the additional training, policies, procedures and specific configuration parameters implemented by the facility. The results are not necessarily representative of what another facility may experience.

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