



Niagara Health

Unifying communications across the enterprise

Organization overview

Niagara Health is a regional healthcare provider with multiple sites and a growing network of virtual and community-based services. The hospital organization provides a wide range of inpatient and outpatient services to more than 450,000 residents across Niagara. Niagara Health's Accreditation with Exemplary Standing is a clear demonstration of the team's commitment to the highest safety and quality standards. As a community-based academic centre, teaching and learning, research, innovation and partnership are propelling the team to imagine a healthier Niagara.

Challenges

- Unify clinical communications across the enterprise
- Help staff stay safe if they felt threatened
- Conserve PPE while minimizing the spread of infectious disease

Vocera Solution

- Vocera communication device
- Vocera mobile application

Results*

- Unified staff communication and enhanced efficiency
- Decreased number of people injured in aggressive incidents by 20%
- Conserved PPE, reduced infection risk

Challenges

Niagara Health, a multi-site hospital system located in Canada, needed a solution to help unify clinical communications across the enterprise. "We were using pagers, VoIP phones and other disparate communication methods to get ahold of each other," said Chuck Quigley, Transformation Director at Niagara Health.

The organization wanted to provide physicians, nurses and other members of staff with a standard means to communicate that could also help them seek assistance, and conserve personal protective equipment (PPE) while minimizing the spread of infectious disease.

Vocera Solution

Niagara Health selected the Vocera system to unify staff communications across its five hospital sites. Their solution includes the Vocera mobile app for use on clinicians' personal smartphones, and wearable Vocera communication devices for hands-free communication. Niagara Health uses Vocera technology enterprise wide. Users logged into the Vocera system can communicate with each other, regardless of which hospital site they are working in.

"Staff all communicate using the Vocera app or hands-free communication device – whatever works best for their role," explained Jeff Wilson, Director of Information and Communications Technology at Niagara Health. "Because the Vocera system is device agnostic, we were able to standardize clinical communication across our hospital campus with ease."

While many physicians primarily use the Vocera mobile app, staff in more hands-on patient care environments prefer the Vocera communication device. Staff can call for help, request supplies or information, or talk with a patient's physician – all without leaving the point of care.

With the Vocera app, physicians share test results and other essential patient information securely including demographics, waveforms, vital signs, care team information and more. The app indicates when a message has been sent, received and read.

"We have peace of mind knowing that staff are always logged into the Vocera system when they're working because it's an essential part of everyday communication," explained Sandy Traynor, Workplace Relations Manager at Niagara Health. "In the event that a care team member needs to call a code white, we know they're prepared to do so."

A code white activates appropriate staff in response to a threat. A user can discreetly double tap the Call button on the wearable Vocera communication device to alert security staff. Security staff, who also use the Vocera device, can hear what is going on while on their way to the scene.

Clinicians caring for COVID-19 positive patients wear the Vocera communication device under PPE. They can communicate hands-free from inside an isolation room if they need supplies or assistance.

Results*

The Vocera system technology unifies staff communications, enhances efficiency and allows Niagara Health staff to provide excellent patient care. The technology is widely adopted.

“Vocera provides me with access to our care team without needing to leave my patient’s side,” Cindy Skubel, Women and Babies Nurse at Niagara Health explained. “Because our physicians all use Vocera technology to communicate, I can easily say, ‘urgently call OB on-call’ and be connected to the Obstetrics physician without needing to know who is working.”

Since deploying Vocera technology systemwide for staff duress calls, the number of people injured in aggressive incidents has decreased by 20%.

“The Vocera system allows us to call a code white and summon assistance in an instant, but it does so much more than that,” said Stevie Christopher, Information and Communications Technology System Analyst at Niagara Health. “It’s a robust communication and collaboration solution that unifies staff across our health system. Staff, hopefully, only need to call a code white on occasion, but they use Vocera communication devices to communicate all shift long.”

With Vocera technology, clinicians caring for COVID-19 positive patients can communicate hands-free from inside an isolation room. “Our frontline team members use Vocera communication devices to easily communicate with each other under their many layers of PPE,” said Christopher. “Clinicians can reach the right person hands-free, regardless of their location, so there’s no need for unnecessary donning and doffing of PPE to communicate face-to-face.” Because staff don’t need to doff, they can save time and conserve PPE, reduce the risk of self-infection and spend more time focused on providing care.

“Vocera technology helps our staff stay safe, connected and prepared,” Traynor said. “We know our staff love it because they have told us, and because they always use it.”

“The number of people injured in aggressive incidents has reduced by 20%, largely because we now have Vocera technology. Unpredictable things happen all the time in healthcare. Vocera technology helps our staff stay safe, connected, and prepared.”

– **Sandy Traynor**

Workplace Relations Manager
Niagara Health



“The Vocera system provides me with access to our care team without needing to leave my patient’s side.”

– **Cindy Skubel**

Women and Babies Nurse
Niagara Health

For More Information

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*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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