



# VERG Brooklyn

Creating a healing environment for patients and clients, while improving staff satisfaction and efficiency

On the sidewalk outside the Veterinary Emergency and Referral Group (VERG Brooklyn) hospital, a client's dog was having a seizure. The client called the office asking for urgent help. Elizabeth Wince, VERG Brooklyn's client services supervisor, stepped outside and saw the client with the dog a few doors down.

Wince used her wearable, voice-activated Vocera communication device, to send a broadcast stat triage to all staff for help. Staff arrived quickly and began providing emergency care and assessing the dog's condition. Fortunately, the dog made a full recovery thanks to expert care from the VERG Brooklyn team.

"If I hadn't been wearing my Vocera communication device," said Wince, "I would have had to run back to the hospital, find a phone and call for help. It would have caused a delay in the immediate attention that was needed in a time-sensitive emergency."

## Creating an improved environment for patients, clients and staff

VERG Brooklyn was formed in 2005 to provide emergency services and specialty medicine exclusively to the Brooklyn community. Several years ago, it moved to a larger and better equipped facility that's optimized for an improved client experience and better patient care.

"At our last facility, we used overhead paging and phone calls for much of our staff communication. We even used a paper message system, and messages often got lost," said Michele Tinsley, Hospital Manager and Veterinary Nursing Administrator at VERG Brooklyn. "Our communication methods were disruptive to staff and, at times, unsettling for clients who were already anxious about their pet's condition. Having a disparate communication system was often distracting and inefficient. Doctors would be in rooms and couldn't answer pages; front desk staff struggled to connect with the right people when they needed them."

## Designing a more efficient communication system

As leadership at VERG Brooklyn were planning the new facility, they decided to omit an overhead paging system altogether and began searching for a communication solution that would help them improve staff efficiency, patient care and client satisfaction.

"We knew we wanted to create a quiet hospital where staff wouldn't be interrupted constantly by phone calls, overhead pages and searching for other members of the care team," explained Tinsley. VERG Brooklyn leadership considered a few clinical communication solutions before deciding that Vocera technology was the best solution for their facility. "Everything changed once we introduced Vocera technology – productivity has grown tremendously, and workflows are much more efficient."

The Vocera solution allows VERG Brooklyn to provide a tranquil and peaceful environment for staff, patients and clients. Hospital receptionists use the Vocera device with a headset to minimize noise and ensure that clients don't overhear staff conversations. "Our entire facility is extremely quiet and calm – from critical care, to euthanasia to our waiting area," Tinsley said. "We love how Vocera technology helps us create a tranquil environment for our clients and patients."

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### – Michele Tinsley

Hospital Manager and Veterinary Nursing Administrator  
VERG Brooklyn

"I can communicate using my Vocera communication device under PPE, which saves time and resources because I'm not constantly changing in and out of my personal protective equipment."

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Emergency and Internal Medicine Technician  
VERG Brooklyn

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Hospital Manager and Veterinary  
Nursing Administrator  
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## Increasing staff productivity through seamless communication

VERG Brooklyn’s spacious facility sprawls two floors and without a communication solution like the Vocera system, efficient communication would be a challenge for staff. “Our facility is large and because I’m not running around looking for people, I can spend time providing the best patient care,” explained Tinsley. “Vocera technology has definitely helped decrease the number of steps taken per shift by our team members.”

Many of the surgery suites and treatment areas at VERG Brooklyn are on the second floor, while the waiting areas are on the first floor. Vocera technology allows care teams to have a constant line of communication, without having to trek up and down stairs or step away from patients. “I work on the second floor of a two-story hospital and often have patients that can’t be left unattended,” said Michelle Urrutia, Emergency and Internal Medicine Technician at VERG Brooklyn. “Because I wear a Vocera communication device, I can stay with my patient and use my Vocera device to ask a colleague near the waiting area to give our client a face-to-face update on their pet.”

Staff can simply press a button on their Vocera communication device and say the name of a person, role or group to quickly connect with the right people. “The ability to set up and communicate with specific groups is terrific,” said Tinsley. “We can pull the right people into a specific room quickly, with a simple voice command.”

## Connecting team members to provide the best patient care

In a hands-on patient care environment like a veterinary hospital, communicating on-the-go is essential. “Vocera technology allows our doctors and nurses to communicate while mobile in our treatment areas, rather than on a phone call at a desk,” said Wince. “Because the Vocera communication device is hands-free, we can be completely hands-on with our patients while staying connected to our colleagues.”

Doctors at VERG Brooklyn regularly need to be on the move. For example, a doctor may have to leave a patient in the exam room to assist with a critical patient in surgery. “It can be a challenge to locate doctors in a veterinary setting if you don’t have the right communication solution,” explained Urrutia. “Without a doctor’s input, patient treatments could be delayed, or incorrect assumptions could be made about a patient’s treatment plan. With Vocera technology I know I can connect with the right doctor in an instant and that my patient’s treatment won’t be delayed.”

The constant line of communication between doctors, technicians and assistants helps staff reach the people and information they need, when they need to. “If I’m working in isolation, I can easily reach out to a doctor to ask a question, or ask an assistant to bring supplies, without leaving the room,” said Urrutia. “I don’t have to compromise a patient’s safety by making frequent trips in and out of an infectious ward. I can communicate using my Vocera communication device under PPE, which saves time and resources because I’m not constantly changing in and out of my personal protective equipment.”

## Expediting critical patients

The Vocera solution makes it easy for care team members to communicate critical patient information and summon assistance in an emergency. When critical patients enter VERG Brooklyn, the care team is ready to treat them right away. The receptionist can use their Vocera device to broadcast a notification to the intensive care unit (ICU) team by simply saying, “call ICU team.” All members of the ICU team are then notified of the incoming patient and obtain case details from the receptionist, so they can prepare the patient’s room and be equipped with the appropriate supplies.

“The broadcast function is extremely useful,” explained Urrutia. “Within seconds of a critical patient entering the hospital, the right care team members can be made aware of the patient’s status and start preparing for treatment accordingly. Any allergies, medications, or other important patient history can be shared with us right away so we can expedite patient treatment.”

The receptionist can also assess patients and provide additional details to the response team. For example, if a patient appears to be nervous or reactive, the receptionist can communicate that information to the appropriate care team using Vocera technology. The care team can be ready with the necessary equipment at triage.

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## Safeguarding staff

In addition to helping VERG Brooklyn provide the best patient care and experience for clients, Vocera technology helps keep staff safe. “My Vocera device has helped me discretely call attention to management without alarming our staff or clients on more than one occasion,” said Tinsley. “We use a specific code if we have a situation that a manager or security needs to tend to, so that we can control things quickly.”

An urgent broadcast made from the Vocera communication device can be used to call for help and help ensure staff never feel unsafe or uncomfortable in the situation they are in. “The Vocera communication device gives us an option to urgently broadcast to alert staff of any safety issues by simply double tapping the device,” explained Wince. “It definitely helps improve staff safety here at VERG Brooklyn.”

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– **Elizabeth Wince**  
Client Services Supervisor  
VERG Brooklyn



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Visit **vocera.com**,  
email **info@vocera.com**  
or call **+1 888 9VOCERA**

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3030 Orchard Parkway  
San Jose CA, 95134  
t: +1 408 882 5100  
f: +1 408 882 5101  
toll free: +1 888 9VOCERA  
vocera.com