

Long-Term Care/Rehab Facility Reduces Noise, Delivers Improved Satisfaction

Responder® 5 technology positively changes environment for patients and caregivers, resulting in better quality care.

Constant disruption from overhead paging in a healthcare facility can create a poor work environment for staff and prevent clear, direct communications in delivering quality care. It can also leave residents agitated and confused — with increased requests for medication — while infringing upon their privacy, inhibiting healing and reducing quality of life.

To overcome these challenges, the Finger Lakes Living Center at Auburn Community Hospital in Auburn, NY, installed Responder® 5 nurse call technology and has virtually eliminated noise, improved staff satisfaction and enhanced the care and comfort of their residents.

Part of the Auburn Community Hospital campus, the Living Center occupies two floors, with 80 beds divided between long-term care and rehab/physical therapy.

“As a nursing facility, we need to deliver quality care with satisfaction for both patients and staff, while generating revenue at the same time,” said Finger Lakes Center for Living Director of Nursing, Abby Gunger. “The Responder® 5 technology helps us do that by improving not only communications but the overall environment — it’s the most important technology we’ve implemented — beyond even the EMR — to help us change the environment and provide a better quality of life for patients.”

Prior to implementing the new technology, Finger Lakes Center for Living used an intercom to announce a residents’ requests facility-wide. As a result, residents’ needs were often paged overhead to alert staff.



“The older system gave us very limited functionality and resulted in poor workflow and inhibited communication,” Gunger added. “And staff found the old ‘call bell’ system annoying and mind-numbing. It sounded like a circus — resulting in noise fatigue among staff and patients alike.”

“We needed a way to let residents make requests in a timely manner and get assistance while promoting their privacy.”

Abby Gunger, Director of Nursing

“When we have greater efficiencies and workflow, we get more done with fewer resources, and the quality of care improves.”

Abby Gunger, Director of Nursing

NEW TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION

The new installation almost totally reduces overhead paging, with direct communications between patients and staff, and between staff and staff with the push of a button. The Responder 5 solution includes:

Pillow Speakers

Allows resident to place calls from their bedside for assistance, water, pain and toilet directly to the correct caregiver. This saves staff steps because they can speak directly to the resident to determine their need without first going to the room.

Direct Connect

Allows residents to speak directly with their caregiver and avoid requests being transmitted by overhead paging and intercom

Enhanced Patient Stations

Caregiver can quickly transmit a staff assist request, send a code blue announcement or cancel an open call

Ancillary stations

Provide for ancillary equipment to be plugged in and monitored via the nurse call system

Pull Cord Stations

Allow a patient to pull for emergency assistance in the shower and bathroom areas, or shared public area, sending an emergency message to caregiver's phone and a flashing dome light in corridor

VoIP Console

At the nursing station, the console provides complete information on incoming calls, on location, priority and time waiting

RECOGNIZED RESULTS

Noticeable results came, too, in regular regulatory reviews vital to the facility's reputation and standing.

In frequent inspections, the focus of auditors is on the organization's ability to provide a home-like environment, Gunger points out.

“In our latest reviews, following the installation of Responder 5,” Gunger said, “auditors were beyond impressed with the new system and the results we're seeing. Every call, every shift was answered within 5 minutes — when typically under 10 minutes is considered reasonable. It's very rare now that our calls roll to the third stop before being answered.”

In addition, the Responder technology has greatly reduced overhead noise, and gives the ability to communicate and respond more efficiently and effectively: staff to staff, administrator to staff, patient to staff, and family to staff.

BEFORE RESPONDER 5: More Noise, Less Privacy

“Noise. Chaos.
Constant steps.
Too many steps.
Those things are just
unnecessary when
a technology like
this is available.”

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Benefits and Improvements

PATIENT SATISFACTION

With the required overhead paging and constant bells ringing in the old system, there was more confusion by residents and more residents up at night because they couldn’t sleep, said Gunger.

By eliminating overhead noise, the Responder 5 technology has improved communications and the environment, resulting in:

- Less agitation, allowing for better sleep periods and reduced need for medications and interventions
- Shortened response times, leading to minimized risks, fewer falls, less stress

Improved communications and response has helped reduce the number of patient falls an average of 30% since implementation of the new system, Gunger added.

Placing Responder 5 technology throughout the facility also allows residents to regain some control of their lives, make decisions

for themselves, and give them greater independence, said Gunger. “We don’t have to have a constant watch on each and every resident, because we know they can always get direct assistance wherever they need it, throughout the residence.”

“This new technology also allows patients to speak directly with staff from their pillow speakers,” Gunger added. “Now, residents are speaking directly with their caregiver directly from the phone.”

“It’s so much quieter on the unit, and that helps enhance residents’ mood and clarity. They can call their caregiver directly whenever needed, and staff can respond without the need to go to the room each time to see what the request is,” said Judy Kulis, RN Manager.

The quieter environment also is noticed by the Medical Director and consulting physicians, Gunger added. They report they are less likely to get calls from the transcriptionist asking what they dictated

in their reports, she said, because noise from overhead paging no longer drowns it out. Transcription is now completed with minimal delay and minimal follow-ups to the physicians.

RESPONSE & REPORTING

Before installing the Responder technology, there was no way to monitor and verify call response times, Gunger said. Now, reporting data can easily be pulled to track responses, and staff accountability has lifted as a result. Using Responder 5 technology, administration can track call response times by room, by unit and by time of day, providing significant tools to help manage workflows, patient loads, and staff activity.

“We don’t micro-manage the reporting,” Gunger said, “but we are seeing significant staff accountability in reducing their response times, and our staff appreciate that we can monitor and verify the care they give their patients.”

“Patients are sleeping better at night, due to noise reduction.”

Abby Gunger, Director of Nursing

STAFF SATISFACTION

Nurses and staff transitioned to the new system very quickly, Gunger points out, and readily adopted the new workflow with no complaints. And the reduced noise and direct communication have already resulted in improved moods, better attention and focus, and a nicer place to work, she added.

“The older system resulted in a lot of wear and tear on staff,” Gunger said, “with much more running around, a lot more steps, and slower response times. Now, we’re seeing fewer trips, fewer steps and a more efficient response to residents’ needs.”

Staff also report liking the ability with Responder to call one another directly to request things for a patient, and to request assistance when needed without the need to go through the desk. “They’re not running around all over looking for people, and most residents can tell them what they need before they ever enter the room,” said Gunger. “This promotes workplace satisfaction, and improves our quality of care. It could also potentially reduce workplace injury, sick days and burn out.”

And, in the rehab unit, staff now has much more direct communication with patients, and are able to respond much faster and much more specific to their need. “We can also coordinate our response across the team to give patients faster attention and assistance,” reported Tiffany Komanecy, RN Manager.

“With the new system, when we need help in a room we can call each other and speak directly by phone,” added Kulis. “That helps us reduce patient anxiety and give them privacy without the need for paging overhead.”

In addition to faster response on the floor, the nursing desk also is seeing vast improvement in efficiency and effectiveness. “The reduced noise and decreased chaos at the desk means less distraction and results in a better level of care,” said Katie Orman, Director of Social Work. “In the older system, we didn’t know of a call until it was paged over the floors. This technology has definitely left the unit much quieter with fewer distractions, which helps us deliver a better level of care.”

As a result, unit secretaries have changed their duties, Gunger said. Calls can now be routed directly to where needed, and unit secretaries have become more integral to data entry and EMR reporting.

“Our workflow and responses are being handled on a decentralized basis now, instead of a rigid centralized flow,” Gunger points out. “As a result, documentation is more timely, with fewer distractions. And social workers report that with the reduced overhead noise, they are getting a better focus from the residents, which makes their time and interaction more efficient and beneficial.”

SIGN-ON / ASSIGNMENTS

Responder 5 technology also is benefiting the daily sign-in and assignments that every staff member goes through when starting the shift and going off duty at the end of shift. Now, each staff member can make their own assignments and assign their phone — from any kiosk on either floor. Once done, it’s easy to report on and track response times and attention to residents, important when verifying and confirm care for each resident.

QUALITY OF LIFE

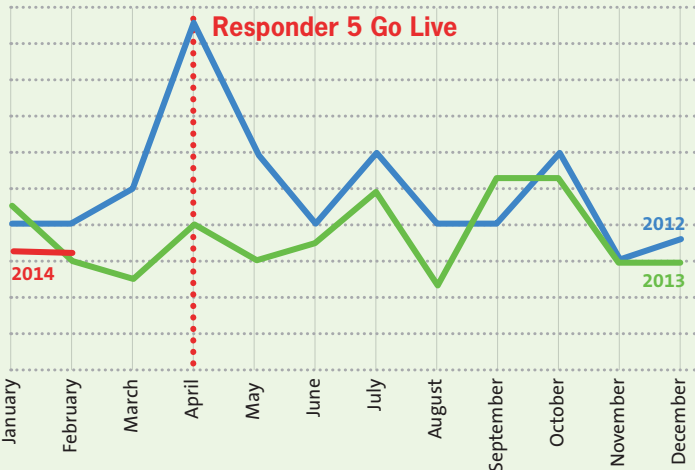
“We need to provide the type of environment that improves the quality of life for our residents, and we now have the edge on doing just that,” said Gunger. “We are a premier residence, but we didn’t anticipate the significant outcomes we would see. Now, we are creating a better quality of life all around.”

With the new technology in place, Gunger reports results across the board, with:

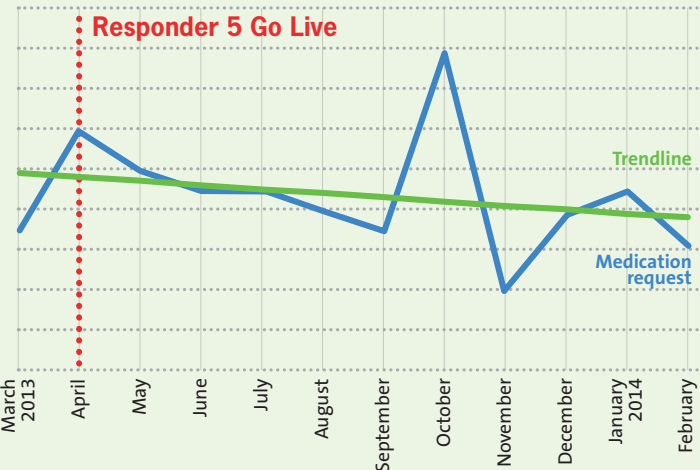
- Less frequent medications due to reduced anxiety**
- Improved quality of life for residents**
- Improved processes and workflow**
- Less disruption to patients**
- Increased privacy and greater independence**
- Reduced confusion and agitation**
- Improved job satisfaction**

Responder solution reduced fall incidents and lowered medication requests.

Fall Statistics: Pre and Post Installation of Responder 5



Sleep Medication Requests: March 2013 – February 2014



“Each morning staff match their assignments and phones, giving them the ability to communicate directly and effectively, and the ability to track response times and calls.”

Michelle Pelton, RN Assistant Manager



About Auburn Community Hospital

Auburn Community Hospital is a not-for-profit, 99-bed acute care facility serving Cayuga County and the surrounding Finger Lakes region of central New York. Under the ACH umbrella is the Finger Lakes Center for Living, providing long-term nursing and short-term rehabilitation services in an 80-bed skilled nursing facility.



About Rauland Responder

Responder® communication and nurse call systems help staff deliver the best possible patient care, with fast, direct patient-to-staff and staff-to-staff communication, flexible integrations, intelligent call routing and real-time reporting.



About Rauland

Rauland-Borg is a respected global leader in the design and delivery of advanced communications, workflow and life-safety solutions for hospitals worldwide, with installations in more than 4,000 hospitals in 40 countries.



About RONCO

Ronco Specialized Systems is committed to the practice of delivering unified and integrated communications for today's enterprise. Privately owned and operated, the company is headquartered in Tonawanda, NY, with additional offices across NY State, Northern PA and North and South Carolina. Ronco employs over 350 sales, engineering, technical support, service and installation personnel.



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