

Connecting Clinicians and Staff Across the Hospital — With the Touch of a Button

Responder® 5 improves workflows, reduces noise, benefits staff/patient satisfaction at Syracuse hospital by linking communications across multiple departments and floors.

NEW CONSTRUCTION, NEW TECHNOLOGIES

St. Joseph’s Hospital Health Center in Syracuse, NY is a 431-bed hospital and health care system undergoing significant new construction, retrofits and renovations. As part of that modernization, St. Joseph’s considered ways to use the latest technology to reduce noise across its floors and units, improve staff workflows and patient satisfaction, and gain better reporting of call response and activities.

ROBUST, FLEXIBLE SOLUTION

Under the new build out, St. Joseph’s selected Responder® 5 technology — initially for its new Emergency Department. Soon after realizing the workflow and satisfaction improvements achieved there, the hospital expanded the Responder 5 installations into new and retrofitted Med/Surg units and then expanded further into its new OR/PACU suites in a new tower building.

Helping to manage the installation and expansion of Responder 5 nurse call throughout the hospital is Rick Ciotti, Network Engineer at St. Joseph’s, who said the goal is to access the latest technology with one campus-wide nurse call platform.

“Before the modernization, we had more than six different nurse call technologies spread across the hospital system,” Ciotti points out. “That led to considerable frustration by staff and inefficiencies in workflow as staff floated from unit to unit. We wanted to standardize on the latest technology, and achieve better integration with other systems, including telephony.”



Ciotti helped manage regular meetings with the clinical teams to select a winning technology, define the workflows and standards desired for a new system, and address the flexibility needed to add and change it as workflows evolved within each department.

“Responder 5 gives us the integrations, streamlined workflows and noise reduction we were looking for,” Ciotti said. “We’ve selected it as our house-wide standard as we build out additional floors, with the goal of improving both patient and staff satisfaction.”

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

A new 60-bed Emergency Department is organized around four zones, with every room and bed including Responder staff terminals, pillow speakers and patient stations for quick and direct communication to caregivers and

“We’ve cut our response times in half, at a minimum.”

Trisha Dobe, RN Coordinator,
St. Joseph’s Hospital Health Center



departments across the hospital with a single button press.

Before deploying the Responder solution, ED staff met regularly on their workflow needs to be sure the Responder build was appropriate and relevant, according to Michelle Grobsmith, RN manager of the ED. The entire ED process was captured in a flow book, with the Responder workflow built from that to create intuitive and simple steps for communications, escalations and calls.

“The new Responder technology is a huge leap forward from the old intercom system we were using before,” Grobsmith reports. “It’s meeting all of our needs, and providing the flexibility to expand and change as required. It’s also simple to use, and very easy to learn and validate.”

The St. Joseph’s ED department includes 60 beds, and can surge to 80 patients on an as-needed basis. Using Responder, Grobsmith reports that teamwork has improved due to better communications, with fewer steps needed by staff to attend to patients’ needs. Bed turnover is faster, and much more efficient with an overall improved flow across the unit.

“Under the older system, we worked with constant bells and overhead paging,” Grobsmith said. “Now, there’s barely any noise at all — which means not only better communication but a better environment to work in.”

OR/PACU

Fifteen new OR suites include ancillary rooms, line rooms, and clean cores. The 25-bed PACU area consists of patient bays, isolation rooms and a procedure room. All areas of OR/PACU have Responder staff terminals that link staff with 25 different departments and areas around the hospital with the push of a button to wireless devices.

Integrating Responder into the OR/PACU area meant identifying and understanding the workflows unique to those departments, and building out the related processes to streamline them.

The new OR/PACU suites tripled the existing footprint, according to Maureen Iacono, BSN RN CPAN, PACU manager, and increased the desire for less overhead paging and direct communication among staff and departments. In tandem with the expansion, the ED and PACU itemized those calls that were most frequently made to other departments, as well as services from the bedside in PACU or from the surgical suite in the OR. These calls were incorporated into specific touchpoints on the Responder 5 staff terminal to enable automated workflow.

“Before putting in Responder, we were depending upon lots of hands-on dialing to reach departments needed frequently, and physically looking for needed staff,” said Iacono. “Now, every call — routine or emergency — can be handled through the Responder system, and even staff to staff communications are now fast and direct. Overhead paging for calls and needs is almost non-existent.”

Staff terminals were not the only solution added, Iacono points out. Pillow speakers at the bed of pre-surgery patients greatly improve patient to staff communication. “Now, we don’t have to remain at the pre-op bedside to find out a patient’s needs,” she said. “Using the pillow speakers, patients can communicate directly to our mobile phones, identify their request and we can get what is needed before coming to the bed. It’s reassuring to them to know that they can reach out, and that we are on the way.”

“We’ve also found great flexibility in the system to meet our needs to update or change our workflow on a continuing basis, as we adapt our processes or identify a new need,” Iacono added. “In the beginning, I wasn’t sure this type of system was needed, but now I can see that the old way of doing things may not have worked out for us nearly as well.”

MED/SURG DEPARTMENT

In the Med/Surg area, Responder has been added to seven units across three floors,

Responder 5 Benefits

- Automated workflows
- Direct communications
- Reduced noise
- Robust reporting
- Improved satisfactions

Responder 5 Technology

- Staff terminals
- Pillow speakers
- Pull cord stations
- Corridor lights
- Telephony integration
- Software and Reporting
 - PC Console, Staff Assignment, Reports
- Nurse Consoles
- Active Directory Integration
- Patient Integration



averaging 25 patient rooms per unit. The Responder solution encompasses telephony integration to Cisco phones to improve patient-to-staff and staff-to-staff communications.

In the roll-out of Responder technology to the Med/Surg units, the oldest systems were targeted first as retrofits and new construction got under way.

The older systems, according to Trisha Dobe, RN Coordinator, left the floors with paging and bells ringing, resulting in noise fatigue by both staff and patients. That also led to poor efficiencies and added steps, as nurses were required to first go to a patient's room to learn the request and then go fulfill it before returning.

"We were left triaging calls, chasing down people, adding more noise," said Dobe. "The new technology gives our patients an easy and direct way to communicate their needs, and they get a faster response. Using Responder and integrating with our phones, we've cut our response times in half, at a minimum."

St. Joseph's is installing the same workflow processes, staff terminal menus and pillow speakers across all Med/Surg units to make it easier for staff to train and float across different floors. The Responder technology also offers flexibility and accountability for staff, improves their teamwork, and helps prioritize their calls.

"The technology is very easy to train on, and staff acceptance is high," Dobe adds. "The new system has worked out exceptionally — I feel bad for the units that don't have it yet!"

REPORTING

Responder also is delivering better reporting of staff activities and call responses.

"Before using Responder, we had no way to verify, track or manage loads," said Dobe. For management, the Responder reporting package is amazing, she said, offering an informed way to manage staff and workloads across shifts and units. Dobe added that reports can offer insight on performance, and help verify response times if an issue is raised by the patient or family.

"The Responder system works, works well, and is a good communication tool. It's a great benefit to the department."

Maureen Iacono, BSN, RN, CPAN, PACU Manager, St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center

BENEFITS — IT

Overseeing the installation of Responder across the hospital's floors, units and departments, the IT staff recognizes the benefits in streamlining processes, reducing noise and reporting features that help troubleshoot and verify calls.

"We also like the fact that Responder integrates easily with our other systems, including EMR, Active Directory and phones, and that it runs on our virtual servers," said Ciotti.

Rauland's local distributor network has been integral to a successful deployment, Ciotti adds.

"Local support from Rauland's distributor, RONCO Specialized, was critical to a successful integration," said Ciotti. "Their knowledge and local service and installation has created a strong working relationship with us as we bring the technology across the hospital."

NEXT STEPS

As St. Joseph's completes the Emergency and OR/PACU technology install, and continues the roll-out across Med/Surg, it already is looking ahead to new integrations and deployments.

"Our nursing staff is not resistant to change," Ciotti said, "and routinely adapts well to new technology. We're already more than halfway through the hospital with Responder 5, and we can foresee continuing to add new integrations to the Responder system on a continuing basis."



"I love this new system and can't imagine running this size ED without it."

Michelle Grobsmith, RN Manager,
St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center

“Responder gives us the ability to pro-actively monitor hardware. If a patient station has a problem, we know about it before the patient and nurse — before a complaint is even lodged.”

Rick Ciotti, Network Engineer,
St Joseph's Hospital Health Center



St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center

St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center is a non-profit, 431-bed hospital and health care system in Syracuse, N.Y., providing services to patients in 16 counties in Central New York State. Through prevention programs and the latest diagnostic treatment procedures, St. Joseph's works with patients to achieve optimum long-term health. A 15-time winner of the National Research Corporation Consumer Choice award, St. Joseph's is affiliated with Franciscan Companies and sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis.



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 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 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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