

Carolinas HealthCare System

TeleHealth Solutions Uses MediCall to Support Carolinas HealthCare System's Mission-Critical Communications

The Challenge

TeleHealth Solutions, a medical call center based in Charlotte, N.C., has one of those “good problems to have”: it is growing. Quickly.

As a vital support arm of Carolinas HealthCare System (CHS), TeleHealth Solutions provides a long list of critical call center services for CHS and more than 120 physician practices in the 700+ Carolinas Physicians Network (CPN). Some of the healthcare-related services include nurse triage, appointment scheduling, after-hours services, patient transfer, and critical code calls. Among TeleHealth's support services are support for CHS marketing activity, outbound call projects, and serving as a CHS customer care line. As their quality reputation grew within CHS, so did the number of clients seeking their service.



While the majority of TeleHealth's clients are individual practices now benefiting from top-notch after-hours support, other beneficiaries of their vast services are the thousands of patients within the CHS network. The system, spanning both North and South Carolina, comprises 32 hospitals, including Carolinas Medical Center (CMC), approximately 200 physician practice locations, and more than 45,000 employees. According to Melissa Davis, Assistant Director of TeleHealth, “It's our job to help patients navigate through our healthcare system to find the resources they need, 24/7.”

With three shifts running around the clock, TeleHealth's clinical and non-clinical agents were processing more than 43,000 calls a month, a volume that continued to grow rapidly as more and

more clients within the CHS network reached out to TeleHealth. To continue providing the dependable, quality customer service it was known for, TeleHealth needed to upgrade its technology and optimize automation.

The Solution

“Since we are adding many new initiatives and services, we needed a system that could support a wide variety and growing volume of calls,” said Davis, who was part of the TeleHealth implementation team. Knowing Carolinas Medical Center used Amcom Software's MediCall™ operator console as the backbone of their communications system, and knowing it was supported by the System's IT department, they jumped at the chance to standardize their solution and chose Amcom.

Not only could the MediCall system easily handle the call center's volume and variety, but, as Davis noted, “of utmost importance, with MediCall we had a standardized communication backbone and could support fully integrated metrics and reports. Everything would be the same throughout the system.”

With an integrated communications system, TeleHealth Solutions was able to respond to more calls, assist more patients, reduce expenses, and most importantly, to continually introduce new ways to increase the value of their service.

The Results

The innovative MediCall console immediately reaped benefits for Davis and her team. With the Amcom system in place, TeleHealth has been able to successfully grow as a call center for Carolinas HealthCare System.

- When a call comes in, agents instantly access individual client profiles, which instruct them on how to process after-hours calls, help determine if they need nurse triage, and highlight office hours, physician paging preferences, appointment scheduling guidelines, and other client-specific information.
- For answering service clients, customized message pad templates ensure agents consistently and accurately gather the patient information deemed necessary by a particular physician client. For example, if answering for an OB/GYN office, the message pad templates prompt the agent to gather key information such as how many weeks along the woman is with her pregnancy.

- The Amcom system supports agents through the process of transferring critical patients into Carolinas HealthCare System—a process where speed and accuracy are paramount.
- A group of agents relies on the Amcom system to send out alerts to necessary hospital staff when patients with heart attack symptoms need to be rushed to the cardiac catheterization lab for treatment. Such automation helps CHS stay under the 90-minute door-to-balloon time recommended by the Joint Commission. This means that a patient should be registered, evaluated, and ultimately receive potentially life-saving heart catheterization within 90 minutes.
- A message reminder in the system alerts the operator if a patient call hasn't been returned, helping to ensure quick customer service.
- They can add remote agents during peak volume.
- With a more automated triage service, TeleHealth Solutions supports CHS with several of its larger goals: keeping non-emergent patients out of the Emergency Department, enabling the ED to direct resources to true emergencies. TeleHealth can also assist patients who do not have a primary care provider to find a physician / medical home within the Carolinas Physicians Network.
- TeleHealth has been able to add marketing services to its core offering, including a New Movers Program where every week agents proactively call new residents of Charlotte to help them find a new family physician.
- Another service initiative involves calling patients who have a primary care physician but have not scheduled a preventative health visit in over a year.

All of these capabilities enable TeleHealth to offer their customers a service that is widely praised for alleviating the time pressures on busy clinical personnel. Physicians can rely on TeleHealth Solutions as a trusted partner to handle many of the administrative services that take away from the primary goal of patient care and safety. As Davis noted, “The primary reasons for physicians participating in our services are that the physicians see an improvement in their quality of life and increased family time while we extend accessible after-hours services for patients.”

The Future

Looking forward, TeleHealth Solutions will partner with Amcom to help address some of Davis' future initiatives. One innovative approach they aim to take in marketing to the community is to offer text messaging capabilities, whereby a resident can contact the hospital to request more information about a particular CHS service. This text-based request would come into TeleHealth Solutions' Amcom console and present as an incoming request call to the agent, much the same as a voice call. The operators would then have the capability to respond to the text message, providing the information requested by the prospective patient. “My generation has new methods of communicating,” said Davis. “We often would prefer to send a text rather than make a voice call, just because it's easier and more convenient.” Capabilities such as this, which focus on the increasing reliance on mobile devices, are among those now available from Amcom.

“Of utmost importance, with MediCall we had a standardized communication backbone and could support fully integrated metrics and reports. Everything would be the same throughout the system.”

Melissa Davis

Assistant Director of TeleHealth Solutions



From left to right, Allyson Doctor, Maureen Powell, and Melissa Davis

Amcom Software

Corporate Headquarters
10400 Yellow Circle Drive
Eden Prairie, MN 55343
800.852.8935

www.amcomsoftware.com