INDIANA UNIVERSITY

THE CHALLENGE

Leaders at Indiana University (IU) Health's Emergency Management department were looking for an easier way to contact the right people for a range of urgent communications. These included severe weather warnings, executive-level notifications of key systems being down, patient transfers and fire drills. Relying on the manual process of people placing phone calls to get the right staff in place had become more time consuming and more inefficient as the organization and its demands grew. Additionally, management wanted to have a clear report of who contacted whom and when.

Fire drills alone were exposing the problem: Emergency Management is required to conduct one fire drill in every building, during every shift, at least once a quarter. With the number of buildings on the hospitals' campuses, this means running about 30 fire drills every quarter.

After a fire drill is conducted, each department in the affected building needs to know about it, so the staff was spending an average of 15 minutes on notification phone calls after each drill. "We were spending too much time manually alerting the appropriate individuals and needed to find a way to streamline this process," said Tom Huser, Safety Coordinator for IU Health's Emergency Management department. "We also wanted to find a solution that provided us with an audit trail of the notifications we send."

THE SOLUTION

IU Health turned to Spok and selected its Spok® e.Notify solution to automate their notification processes. Spok e.Notify is an emergency notification solution that

OVERVIEW

Indiana University Health, formerly Clarian Health, is an Indiana-based healthcare system which has ranked among "Best Hospitals in America" by U.S. News & World Report for five consecutive years. Three downtown Indianapolis hospitals formed IU Health in 1997, including Methodist Hospital, Indiana University Hospital and Riley Hospital for Children.

In total, the three Indianapolis hospitals of IU Health have more than 1,200 beds and both Methodist and Riley provide Level 1 trauma care. IU Health strives to improve the health of their patients and community through innovation and excellence in care, education, research and service.

INDUSTRY

Healthcare

BUSINESS DRIVERS

- Reduce time spent contacting people for a range of important notifications
- Simplify the process for 30 quarterly fire drills

SOLUTION

Spok® e.Notify

RESULTS

- Reduced time spent on fire drills from about 30 hours/year to one or two hours
- Established two-way communication with local campus to improve safety notifications

> "[Spok's] system has provided Indiana University Health with more messaging functionality than we ever imagined would be possible."

Tom Huser
Safety Coordinator for IU Health's
Emergency Management Department

allows one-way or two-way messages to be sent to pre-determined or dynamic groups simultaneously to eliminate time-consuming phone calls. The solution provides IU Health with tracking capabilities of when notifications were sent and received, as well as two-way communications if needed.

The Emergency Management team has notification tiers consisting of different groups. Tier one includes executives from all three hospitals, and tier two includes individuals that are hospital and department specific. Fire drill notifications are primarily sent to the tier two, department-specific groups.

Fire drill notifications are not the only use IU Health has for Spok e.Notify. They have found ways to automate the notification process for other time-sensitive situations, including severe weather alerts. IU Health utilizes the system to send notifications to executives to bring decision-makers together quickly for a phone call or meeting to assess an incident and make time-critical decisions.

Messages can also be sent to off-site locations such as labs, administrative buildings or other hospitals in the statewide network to notify them of a patient transfer, lab delay or an incident occurrence. "Indiana University Hospital and Riley Hospital for Children are both located next to the campus of Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI)," said Huser. "We work closely with IUPUI and are now able to send notifications from the [Spok] e.Notify system to the school's Emergency Management department when the campus will be affected by something happening at the IU Health facilities."

An additional benefit to IU Health is that Spok e.Notify integrates perfectly with their other Spok solutions which automate the centralized call center. To service the three main facilities, IU Health leverages Spok® Smart Console and Spok® Smart Web. Spok Smart Console is an operator console that enables the Call Center staff to respond to and process calls more quickly with just a few keystrokes. The Spok Smart Web solution is a web-based directory for personnel's contact and scheduling information including on-call schedules. Users are able to update their own contact information and perform directory searches without involving the operator group.

All of IU Health's Spok solutions leverage a single database for accurate information sharing. They also integrate with IU Health's Cisco® PBX infrastructure, providing seamless communications throughout the organization.

THE RESULTS

"The [Spok] e.Notify solution has allowed us to save valuable time and resources by creating an efficient process for our fire drills," said Huser. "Our staff loves [Spok] e.Notify because we can message to any mobile device they happen to use." IU Health is currently using the solution to message to departmental phones, pagers, home phones, smartphones, and even email. Spok e.Notify will message to an individual's secondary device if the message is not acknowledged using the primary contact information in the system. With every fire drill, departments are required to fill out a documentation form, and the Spok e.Notify notifications serve as a reminder for the staff to submit this form. The system has reduced the time spent on fire drills from about 30 hours/year to one or two hours.

"Sometimes occurrences in our facilities affect the campus, and it's nice to have an easy and efficient way to communicate information to the correct university personnel," Huser said. "[Spok's] system has provided IU Health with more messaging functionality than we ever imagined would be possible."

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