

SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE HEALTH SYSTEM

THE CHALLENGE

The Southern New Hampshire Health System (SNHHS) is a fast-growing health system with 54 medical offices and a 180-bed community hospital that provides exceptional health and medical care services. The organization consists of 180 providers and 29 different specialties. With such a large network to support, the hospital's call center is responsible for managing high volumes of calls and a range of information around the clock.

The call center for SNHHS was becoming overwhelmed. A team of excellent call center representatives was receiving and routing a dizzying number of both internal and external calls, with internal transfers consuming the most time. Analysis started to show that many of these internal calls probably didn't need to be routed through call center representatives. The health system also relied on a costly third-party firm to provide after-hours answering services for the many physicians' offices.

Managing on-call schedules was not easy. The team maintained more than 75 different schedules and printed a booklet, which became outdated the minute it was created. Not only was this becoming too cumbersome for the representatives to manage effectively, but the caregivers had no simple way to update their on-call status themselves.



"Our management team knew we needed to implement some changes to our call center procedures to provide better support for everyone calling in," said Judy Mayopoulos, Call Center Manager for Southern New Hampshire Health System. "This meant finding a way to manage our own answering service to improve customer service both internally and externally, while providing better patient care."



OVERVIEW

The Southern New Hampshire Health System has been providing Nashua, N.H. and surrounding communities with exceptional health and medical care services for more than 100 years.

The health system is committed to helping improve, maintain, and preserve the overall health and well-being of the greater Nashua area. This is accomplished through approximately 9,600 patient discharges a year and around 45,000 ED visits a year. Management of Southern New Hampshire Health System recognizes that patient care is not only affected by the doctors and nurses in the hospital, but is also impacted by what is happening in the hospital's contact center.

BUSINESS DRIVERS

- Provide better support for internal partners
- Bring physicians answering services in house
- Reduce time operators spend transferring calls

SOLUTION

Spok® Healthcare Console, Spok® Speech Solutions, & Spok® Web Directory

RESULTS

- Spok Speech offloaded 55% of live operator calls
- 97% correct transfer rate for Spok Speech calls
- Physicians answering services now offered in-house for SNHHS physicians

> “The [Spok] speech recognition solution has offloaded 55 percent of our live operator calls.”

Judy Mayopoulos
Call Center Manager

THE SOLUTION

Management at SNHHS developed a plan to bolster their call center with physicians answering services, operator console, speech recognition, web-based on-call scheduling, and messaging capabilities. They selected Spok’s contact center solutions to help overcome their challenges and achieve their goals.

Spok’s speech recognition solution reduces the volume of calls handled by representatives. Spok Speech allows callers to connect their own calls or access information by following voice prompts rather than using a representative’s assistance.

The system was initially rolled out internally to gradually introduce it to staff and gain acceptance. “The staff have adapted to the speech recognition and like it because they don’t need to be transferred multiple times,” said Mayopoulos. After great success with the internal release of speech recognition, SNHHS then rolled it out for external callers as well.

The health system is using the Spok Web Directory for its online staff directory and on-call scheduling solution. Each department is now responsible for managing and updating their web-based on-call schedules. Call center representatives are not spending time trying to track down an individual only to find out they’ve contacted the wrong person. With the integration to the Spok Healthcare Console, all the information they need is right in front of them.

THE RESULTS

“The [Spok] speech recognition solution has offloaded 55 percent of our live operator calls,” said Mayopoulos. “Our statistics also show that 97 percent of the calls that come through the speech system are transferred correctly. That’s a lot of efficient call processing without human intervention.”

By cutting the load of internal calls, the call center representatives now have enough bandwidth so that the hospital can bring physicians answering services in house. This service has become a new source of revenue for the hospital.

Management at SNHHS is very pleased with the new in-house answering service because the call center representatives are familiar with working in the healthcare environment—which isn’t always the case with third-party answering service companies. SNHHS is able to accommodate each doctor’s unique protocols or requests. For example, “only call a certain phone number after 10 p.m.” or “after two tries, call this number.”

THE FUTURE

Looking forward, Southern New Hampshire Health System is focusing on emergency preparedness and is considering implementing Spok’s emergency notification system, Spok® e.Notify. “When severe weather, an emergency disaster, or a medical emergency occurs, we need be able to quickly send the right notifications to the right staff on a variety of mobile devices,” said Mayopoulos. “Like our other [Spok] solutions, [Spok] e.Notify would allow us to enhance patient care and offer a safer environment for our staff and patients.”