



Client

Greenville Regional Hospital
www.greenvilleregionalhospital.com

Industry

Healthcare

Challenge

The four buildings on the main campus of Greenville Regional Hospital used four separate, outdated PBX systems for their phone service. Maintaining the systems and reconfiguring the phones were difficult, communication between buildings was limited, and support was almost nonexistent. A family practice facility 15 miles away used ordinary phone service, allowing no advanced features and resulting in high long-distance charges.

Solution

Cisco® Unified Communications, based on Cisco UCS® technology, provided an affordable, fully featured and easily configurable solution that responds to the hospital network's need for advanced telephony, paging and messaging.

"It just went great. The technical engineer that Sirius assigned to our project was amazing. He knew the systems inside and out, was very good at explaining how things work, and was always willing to answer any questions that I had. By the time we went live, I knew more about the new system than I had about the old ones, and I'd been working with them for almost five years."

– Matt Buck, IT Director

Regional hospital cures ailing telephony system with Cisco Unified Communications solution



Greenville Regional Hospital (GRH) is a 42-bed general medical and surgical hospital in Greenville, IL, approximately 60 miles east of St. Louis, MO. Its active medical staff includes 13 full-time practitioners, with more than 50 specialty physicians who see patients for consultation and treatment each month.

There are four buildings on the main GRH campus, including the hospital itself and three affiliated buildings. There is also a family practice facility located approximately fifteen miles away. Each of the four buildings on the hospital campus had its own PBX (private branch exchange) system; a Nortel® PBX at the hospital and older Panasonic® PBXs at the other buildings. The family practice facility relied on POTS (plain old telephone service) for its calls, and because of its location, any calls to buildings on the hospital campus were toll calls, resulting in high ongoing long-distance bills for the organization.

Maintenance and functionality were a major ongoing issue for the four PBX systems on the hospital campus. The Nortel system, while outdated, was still reliable and supported, though it offered limited functionality. The three Panasonic systems were a different story; because of their age and small installed base, there was only one person in the area who knew how to work on them, and he was only available on a part-time basis. Even the local phone system companies knew of no one who was qualified to work on them, and common system changes such as adding, moving or changing an existing phone were a challenge.



When GRH started integrating the different physicians' offices on the hospital campus, the separate phone systems became a bigger pain point, since even simple communication between offices was an issue. If a hospital administrator wanted to speak with a doctor, he or she would have to call an outside number into the physician's office, and speak with an assistant who would route the call to the doctor or manually take a message.

There were safety and security issues with the old systems, too. Paging at the hospital building was not tied into the paging systems at the other three buildings on the campus, so there wasn't a way to provide any kind of emergency notification such as severe weather warnings. And the other buildings couldn't page at the hospital to alert staff to security issues.

For more than three years, GRH administrators evaluated options for updating or replacing the outdated PBX systems. But the systems that were proposed—often with features that GRH didn't really need—cost as much as \$500,000 for the hospital alone, so they were not financially feasible.

In December 2012, GRH started a conversation with Sirius about replacing the antiquated PBX systems across all their buildings with a single Cisco Unified Communications solution that could be easily managed and configured by the GRH staff.

GRH was immediately impressed by the features that could be tailored to match the organization's needs, as well as the expertise of the Sirius technical staff. But what sealed the deal was the fact that the all-new Cisco solution was going to cost significantly less than upgrading the hospital's current system and extending it to the other buildings on campus.

Installation was completed in less than two months. The new solution is based on two rack-mounted Cisco Unified Computing System™ (Cisco UCS) servers that are configured for load balancing and failover, so they act as a single system but provide reliability in case one has to be taken offline. The servers are running Unified Communications Manager 9.1.2, Unity Connection voicemail, and Instant Messaging & Presence. A Cisco VG224 Analog Gateway allows the system to work with standard analog phones in common areas such as elevators. GRH is also evaluating the Cisco Jabber® collaboration solution for widespread deployment.

There are approximately 300 new endpoints, including Cisco desktop IP phones and Cisco wireless handsets that connect through access points located throughout the facilities, so staff can use their phones while moving freely among the buildings.

The new system allows extension-to-extension calling not only throughout the four buildings on the main hospital campus, but also from the family practice site without toll charges. The networking engineer from Sirius set up specific paging zones; in the hospital building pages can go through the ceiling speakers or through phones, and for the other buildings on campus they can either page all at one time through speakers, or can page a specific building if they need to. Overhead paging in the hospital building is tied into the system as well, so GRH can now provide emergency paging through phone speakers to the other buildings on the hospital campus, and the other buildings on campus are able to page through the overhead speaker system at the hospital.

IT Director Matt Buck was thrilled by the combination of value and features that came with the Cisco solution. "We didn't have to pay extra for any of this functionality. It was all included in the system, and it's worked out great for us." In the end, the entire solution was implemented for significantly less than the price quoted for other systems.

But Matt was even more pleased by the service and expertise he received from his Sirius team. "This was a huge project for us. We had two separate go-lives, with just one person from Sirius handling all of the technical part, plus the project manager. And honestly, we have only received compliments about how smooth the transition was to the new system." Matt's team did a post-install meeting to discuss how the project went, and literally couldn't come up with anything they thought could have gone better.



For more information about Cisco Unified Communications solutions available from Sirius, as well as our full range of networking, telepresence and mobility solutions from Cisco, contact your Sirius representative or visit www.siriuscom.com/GoCisco.



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