



Industry

Healthcare

Daily Use

- Patient care
- Staff communications
- Emergency communications

Solution

- Spectralink DECT handsets, integrated with Dalcon Alert! system, notify AVH nurses when bed, chair, IV pump and other alarms are triggered in patient rooms
- System also helps maintain bed turn schedules
- Messages displayed on handsets advise nurses of the nature of the problem and patient's location
- Full phone functionality also enables nurses to make and receive calls to physicians and other staffers
- Spectralink DECT handsets allow hospital administrators and staff to communicate and coordinate with others

Results and Benefits

- Nurses can respond more efficiently to patient alerts, leading to enhanced care
- Automated bed turn reminders give nurses one less thing to worry about
- Full phone functionality also enables nurses to make and receive calls to physicians and other staffers
- Staff can replace pagers with more functional Spectralink DECT handsets

Androscoggin Valley Hospital Places Patient Emergencies in Nurses' Hands with Spectralink DECT Handsets and Dalcon Alert! System

Overview

Like small hospitals throughout North America, Androscoggin Valley Hospital (AVH) balances growing workloads against ever-tighter budgets and limited resources. The 25-bed facility is located in Berlin, N.H., a city of 10,000 at the edge of the White Mountains.

But in many ways, AVH isn't at all like most small hospitals. Its impressive range of care—from primary healthcare and pediatric services to specialty practices and advanced surgery—places AVH on par with larger facilities. Then there is its strategic approach to communications. In 2010, AVH implemented a new Spectralink Digital Enhanced Cordless Telephone (DECT) infrastructure that efficiently alerts the hospital's nursing staff when a patient needs help. Integrated with the Dalcon Alert! system from Dalcon Communications, Inc., the wireless Spectralink DECT handsets signal nurses whenever alarms within patient rooms are triggered, advising them where they're needed and why. The cost-effective solution even reminds them to reposition immobile patients every two hours.

Not only does the system help simplify the job of caring for patients, but it supplies nurses with their own telephones to consult with physicians, respond to pages, or interact with staff in other departments. The Spectralink DECT handsets also have streamlined communications throughout the facility by replacing pagers for AVH administrative staff and technicians. As a result, it's easier than ever for AVH to enhance care by responding quickly to patient needs.

Replacing an Outdated System

The legacy communications system at AVH was long overdue for replacement. "We'd been working with outdated systems that couldn't be repaired," recalls Clare Vallee, vice president of nursing at AVH. "Parts of it were over 30 years old."

The communication infrastructure—a patchwork of nurse call and alarm systems linked to a Mitel PBX—worked, though far from perfectly. "We had huge issues with bed alarms," says Vallee, referring to the systems integrated with patient beds that emit an audible signal when a weak or infirm patient leaves his bed—or worse, falls from it. "We could hear the alarm from down the hall, but we wouldn't know which room it was coming from."

Alarms for chairs and IV pumps had similar problems. "We knew each alarm's sound, so we knew what the problem was; it just took a while to find the room," says Brenda Aubin, AVH's Medical-Surgical Unit director. "Our culture has always been that if you hear an alarm, you just go. So several nurses would respond—not just the nurse assigned to that room. It probably wasn't the most efficient process."

"With the Spectralink DECT solution and Dalcon Alert! system, we now know immediately what problem the patient is having and where the patient is. Responding to alarms is easier now."

—Brenda Aubin, Director, Medical-Surgical Unit, Androscoggin Valley Hospital

"Spectralink's team worked closely with us to optimize the handsets for use with the Dalcon Alert! platform. Those efforts substantially streamlined integration and deployment at AVH."

— David Condra, CEO, Dalcon Communication Systems, Inc.

Nurses also must reposition some patients at least once every two hours to prevent pressure sores that can lead to infection. But staying on schedule proved a persistent challenge. "Bed turns were self-policed," says Aubin. "The expectation was for each nurse to keep that responsibility straight. But across multiple shifts and changing routines, it wasn't easy."

Putting Alerts in Nurses' Hands

AVH turned to Dalcon, a Spectralink VoIP Field Verified partner. Dalcon proposed a solution that integrates Dalcon Alert!, a new solution designed especially for hospitals, with Spectralink DECT handsets. When an alarm is triggered or a patient presses his bedside call button, Dalcon Alert! automatically sends nurses a brief text message describing the nature of the alert and the patient's room number. The system interfaces with AVH's Mitel PBX via the Dalcon Communications Manager (DCM) server, which generates the messages and distributes them via the Spectralink DECT Wireless Server 6000. An overhead monitor located at the nurse's station also displays alerts and their status. "With the Spectralink DECT and Dalcon Alert! system, we now know immediately what problem the patient is having, and where the patient is," says Aubin. "Responding to alarms is easier now."

The budget-friendly solution also keeps track of bed turn schedules by alerting nurses when the bed turn cycle reaches 90 minutes, and again at the two-hour mark. "It's one less thing nurses have to worry about," says Vallee.

Nurses use Spectralink DECT handsets. Designed to withstand heavy use without requiring recharges during long hospital shifts, the programmable handsets assign unique rings to each alert, an audible cue that saves nurses time and trouble.

By functioning as a wireless telephone, the Spectralink DECT handsets also offer nurses some freedom. "Before, if a nurse called a physician, she either had to wait for him to call back, or we'd have to hunt her down when the call came," says Aubin. "Now she can get the call directly."

Nurses also use the phones to communicate with other AVH staffers, many of whom carry Spectralink DECT handsets to replace pagers that lacked Spectralink features like speed dialing. "Staff in radiology, our sleep center, and dietary department, along with our house coordinators, all use them," says Vallee, "and they love them."

The AVH solution also involved some crucial customization by Spectralink. "Spectralink's team worked closely with us to optimize the handsets for use with the Dalcon Alert! platform," notes Dalcon CEO David Condra. "Those efforts substantially streamlined integration and deployment at AVH."

Future plans may call for replacing AVH's end-of-life PBX. Fortunately, the new Dalcon DCM and Spectralink DECT handsets would work seamlessly with an IP-based solution—offering AVH another chance to show just how far even a small hospital's budget can go.

To find out how Spectralink can help your organization, visit us at spectralink.com or speak with a Spectralink Account Representative.

Partner

Dalcon Communication Systems, Inc.
www.dalcon.com



Product Listing

Real-Time Communication
and Collaboration Solutions

- 25 Spectralink DECT handsets
- Spectralink DECT Wireless Server
- Dalcon Alert! Patient Monitoring and Alert Management System
- Dalcon Communications Manager Server

About Spectralink

Spectralink, a global leader in wireless solutions, solves the everyday problems of mobile workers through technology, innovation and integration that enable them to do their jobs better. By constantly listening to how customers move through their workdays, Spectralink is able to develop reliable, enterprise-grade voice and data solutions and deliver them through a powerful, durable device.



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