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# Lives on the Line: How a Robust Network Infrastructure Enhances Healthcare Standards

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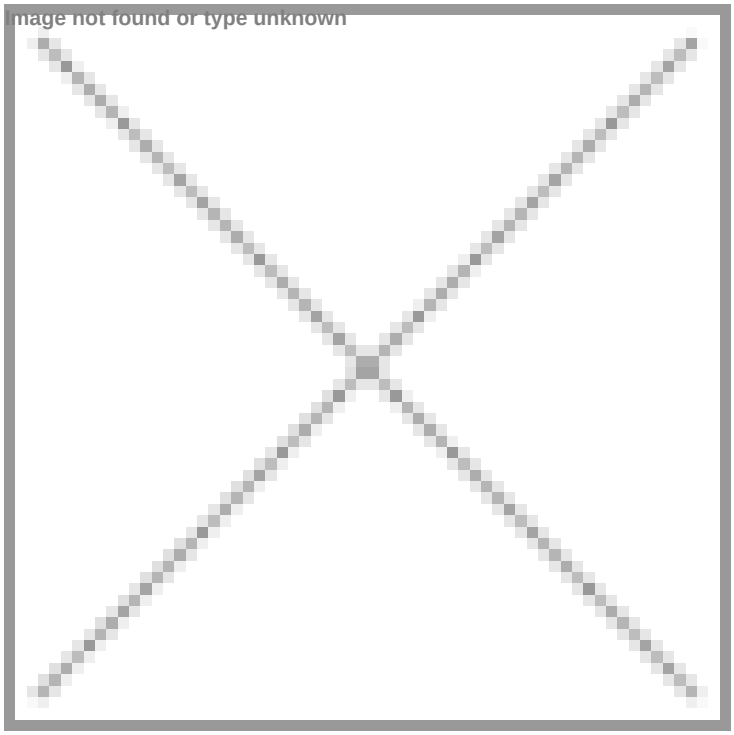


The Singapore General Hospital recently reported a Hepatitis C outbreak, affecting 22 patients. While the possible cause of the outbreak has yet to be determined, this recent scare provides a strong indication of what could go wrong in a hospital. Healthcare institutes are one of the most complex environments, with numerous players working together to co-create the patient experience. Each player, whether doctors, nurses, pharmacists or front line staff must function seamlessly as a singular, well-oiled machine to deliver efficient and quality service - a hallmark of world class healthcare standards.

Unsurprisingly, studies have shown that the failure to communicate is a significant factor of adverse clinical events and outcomes. The incredibly large amount of interactions taking place every day, each with different dimensions of complexity leaves a very small margin for error. Even the slightest miscommunication can result in devastating consequences.

**Simplify the flow of background information**

To minimize communication errors, healthcare institutes should consider investing in a customized business communications solution that is secure and always available. This system should be able to establish a secure audio, Web or High Definition video conference with anyone from any telephone or multiple video endpoint devices, any location, and any browser for spontaneous collaboration.

With a clear, reliable and secure means of communicating and collaborating, medical and admin staff alike will spend less time battling a spotty network connection, or even be saved a physical trip down the corridor to pass information. All this time saved means that staff, be it doctors or nurses will have on average more time to look into the needs of the patient. Lives may even be saved, such as when a pharmacist catches a lapse in a prescription, and is able to contact the doctor in real-time.

**Control communications in real-time**

The healthcare sector has evolved to embrace mobility. Medical personnel are now empowered to administer telemedicine, to 'see' patients through video calls, or seamlessly share and pull out patient information via a secured database.
However, security remains a major cause for concern in the area of healthcare with the proliferation of mobile devices and Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policies. IDC predicts that by the end of 2015, 50 per cent of healthcare organizations would have experienced 1 to 4 cyber-attacks in the year, with 1 in 3 ending up successful. As such, it is important that healthcare institutes invest in solid network security to ensure that patient data is protected, even while keeping it available to those who rely on it. Healthcare providers can look for Local Area Network (LAN) solutions that give them centralized visibility and control over the wireless network, preventing unauthorized access to staff-only networks.

**A healthy network makes for healthier patients**

Healthcare institutes often underestimate the importance of a reliable and efficient network infrastructure - a critical backbone to healthcare operations. As healthcare institutes make the migration from paper to digital, more needs to be done to ensure that information systems remain secure, and new clinical information tools are easy to use. A poorly implemented system would mean that healthcare professionals will spend more time troubleshooting or worse still, fall back to the traditional way of manual reports.

The promise of connected healthcare is not far. Farrer Park Hospital in Singapore for example, has taken steps to embrace a connected network infrastructure that will serve as a platform for quality patient care into the long term. The hospital enables videos of operations to be broadcast in real-time within the hospital network. This helps with telemedicine and training.

The 220 bedded facilities, officially opened in March 2016, have the latest state of the art equipment and technology. Together with a connected network infrastructure, the seamless flow of information enables those who need the information, receives it in real time. This efficiency leads to improved patient outcomes.

Death by medical errors is unfortunately plaguing hospitals even into the 21st Century, and are symptomatic of miscommunication. To counter this, healthcare institutes should consider the possibilities of connected healthcare to enhance the way their medical staff communicate on a day-to-day basis, and ultimately create a world-class patient experience. With the amount of time and resources saved from navigating clumsy backend systems, healthcare professionals will be able to invest their time in the people that matters most - patients.