ONSOLVE™

Critical Communications System Helps Health System Stay Ready At A Moment's Notice

The Client

St. Joseph's Health of Paterson, NJ, which is widely recognized as a leading healthcare provider in the New York Metropolitan Area and the State of New Jersey.

The Challenge

St. Joseph's previous mass notification system was cumbersome and difficult to use in sending alerts.

The Solution

The health system's new chief information officer shared her previous positive experience with OnSolve Critical Communications — and her new colleagues at St. Joseph's were convinced when they gave it a try.

With 'click, click, click' simplicity, OnSolve® Critical Communications helps leading health system deploy urgent — often life-saving — alerts with intuitive ease and speed.

St. Joseph's Health has received numerous awards for superior health care. This includes being regularly selected by U.S. News & World Report as a Best Hospital in the New York Metropolitan Area. The system also has been recognized for taking good care of employees, being named to the Becker's Healthcare list of 150 Top Places to Work in Healthcare.

Based in Paterson, NJ, St. Joseph's includes two hospitals (St. Joseph's University Medical Center and Children's Hospital and St. Joseph's Wayne Medical Center), a rehabilitation center and 32 off-site locations, including image centers and physician offices.

OnSolve to the Rescue

A successful health care organization like St. Joseph's requires good communication. However, a recent six-day email outage across the system interrupted the smooth flow of information critical to hospital operations.

The Results

St. Joseph's has found numerous ways to use OnSolve Critical Communications, from medical emergencies to weather and closing alerts for the hospital's daycare center.

"You don't know how much you need something until it's gone," says Debra Mountenay, St. Joseph's director of telecommunications.

St. Joseph's, though, had a reliable backup during the outage, she adds. "We used OnSolve to keep our staff updated."

Key Recommendation of a Satisfied Customer

The health system has been using an OnSolve Critical Communications system since 2017 when St. Joseph's new chief information officer recommended them. Mountenay explains, "She came from another organization that used OnSolve. She said, 'Look at this,' and once we looked at it, we said, 'Wow!'"

St. Joseph's had been using another mass notification system through a grant. "It was cumbersome," Mountenay recalls. "It was hard to update messages. It was not user friendly."

When the grant ran out, St. Joseph's started using OnSolve.

Couldn't Be Easier

"It really does everything we need it to do," Mountenay says. "It can't be easier, can it?"

St. Joseph's makes OnSolve a key part of communications, transmitting a wide range of alerts via phone calls and text messages.

Mountenay adds that the health system also will be using the Desktop Alerting capability to quickly deliver critical information to nurses and other staff who can't check email regularly due to their patient care responsibilities. Desktop Alerting helps ensure that messages are seen, via "pop-up" alerts that display on desktops in front of open applications.

Following are a few examples of how St. Joseph's uses OnSolve, Mountenay says:

- To send medical codes by phone — in life and death situations, like strokes and trauma — to doctors who are on call. OnSolve shows if messages get through to intended recipients. "It's different than a pager, when you send a page and hope it's received. With OnSolve you know if you need to follow up or call someone else."

- To alert parents of children in St. Joseph's childcare center about weather emergencies and closings. All parents are signed up to use the system.

- To enable members of the St. Joseph's Patient Safety Committee to communicate with one another during an event. For instance, OnSolve was used to alert leaders when a Department of Health team arrived to begin the hospital's inspection. "The accreditation people, we don't know when they're coming, so as soon as they hit the door, the first thing we do is send out a message to management so everyone is ready," Mountenay says.

Ready at a Moment's Notice

To help deploy alerts at a moment's notice, Mountenay says, St. Joseph's has used OnSolve's template capability. This allows her team to create and preload alerts for a variety of scenarios, such as an active shooter event (which fortunately, St. Joseph's has not had to activate). "It's just great to know you can send an alert quickly when you have to."

Contact information for each employee is uploaded to OnSolve from the health system's human resources program. To eliminate this step, Mountenay says, St. Joseph's has budgeted to add an automated link next year from the human resources system to OnSolve. When employees update their information on the human resources program, it will be automatically updated on OnSolve.

Four system administrators are authorized to send system-wide messages via OnSolve, while about 25 leaders have the ability to send group-specific messages.

"OnSolve has done a good job making it intuitive and easy to use. It's just click, click, click, and the message goes."

— Debra Mountenay
St. Joseph's director of telecommunications

Visit OnSolve.com to learn more.

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