TELMED IQ

Case Study: Prisma Health

Solving Workflow Challenges with a Clinical Communication Platform

PRISMA HEALTH℠

Location: South Carolina
Solution: Telmediq
Integrations: Epic, Vocera, Amtelco, QGenda, ShiftAdmin, Hill Rom (planned)
Medical Campuses: 7
Hospitals: 8
Affiliated Sites & Facilities: 170
Licensed Beds: 1,662

Key Challenges

The results of an IRB-approved Physician Informatics Study revealed that physicians and nurses at Prisma Health were collectively wasting an average of 28.39 hours every shift in frustrated attempts to communicate with one another. More than 75 percent of respondents were unsure if their critical messages were being received.

"A tremendous amount of time was spent engaging with the paging system," notes Nicholas Perkins, DO, Hospitalist and Physician Informaticist for Prisma Health.

Armed with the data, Dr. Perkins and his team engaged Telmediq to design and implement an integrated communication and collaboration system that provided efficient access both to clinicians and to clinical information. Basic secure texting software would improve communication, but it could not address workflow challenges at the clinical level.

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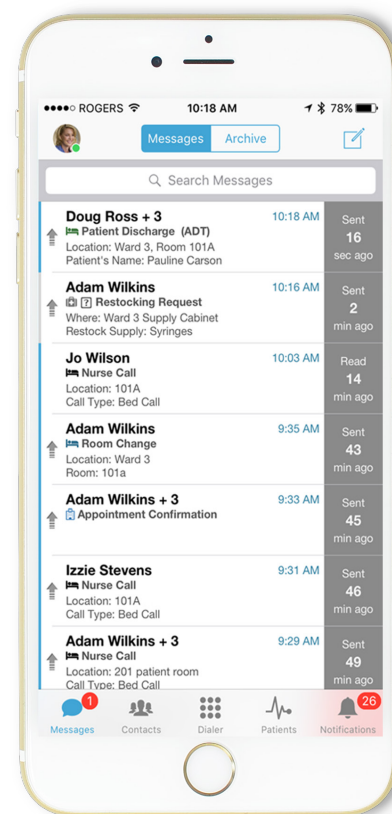> Prisma Health

Developing the Solution

Working closely with Telmediq, Prisma Health stakeholders mapped the organization's existing workflows, looking for process improvement opportunities and areas where system consolidation could be beneficial. The solution delivered several key benefits:

Enhanced Paging Functionality
Existing pager numbers were routed through Telmediq, offering the reliability and trackability of the cloud-based platform without disrupting established workflows.

HIPAA Compliant Messaging
Meeting HIPAA compliance for secure texting, voice communication and image sharing was essential to remove compliance risks of unsecure messaging. Unified Schedules—With both a built-in scheduling tool and the ability to integrate with other scheduling platforms, Telmediq provided a system-wide view of schedules for every department in the organization. Physicians also have the ability to adjust their own schedules at the local level.

Role-and Schedule-Based Communication

The system-wide schedule enables clinicians to communicate directly with on-call clinicians without having to determine who is presently on call. The system automatically routes the message to the right doctor or nurse.

The success of Prisma Health's system is based on a two-fold routing approach. The base routing is delivered by the integrated, system-wide on-call schedule. Then, rules-based settings are employed on an ad-hoc basis to suit the specific messaging preferences of various departments. Neurology, for example, can choose to send non-urgent after-hours messages to a physician assistant. The result is a dynamic system that promptly and automatically finds the on-call provider in every messaging scenario.

"As an end user, I should never have to wonder who to page based on time, day, holiday, or [physician communication preference]," says Dr. Perkins. "That should never be a cognitive burden on your end user."

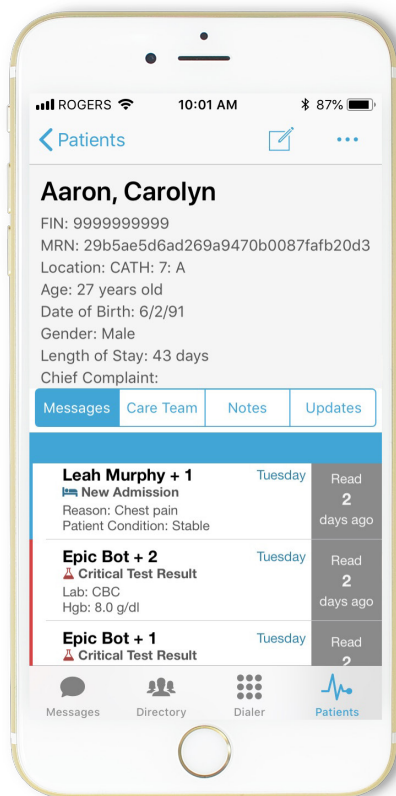**Patient-Centered Collaboration**

Integration with the EMR enabled patient-centered efficiency that dramatically reduced care delays. Clinical teams can now easily access the patient record at the point of care to reference a real-time view of orders, results and patient-centric care team messages. There is no need to log into multiple systems or exit the patient room to retrieve critical information. With the ability to include patient history from the EMR, attach HIPAA-compliant images, and view complete message threads, clinicians now have essential context with their communications to facilitate better care decisions.

Intelligent Message Escalation

Workflow rules were put in place to ensure that urgent communications are escalated if unanswered within a pre-determined period of time. Prisma Health also developed a paging protocol that formalized previously undocumented paging practices. Based on the new protocol, Telmediq built workflows into the communication platform to reduce misdirected messages, provide escalations for urgent pages, and create a pager monitoring feature for physicians in the OR.

Auditability

With its paging system, Prisma Health lacked visibility into individual communication processes (such as send, view or reply statuses), as well as insight into the total communication workflow. The Telmediq platform now provides metrics that allow the team to track how long it takes for clinicians to respond to messages and to identify communication inefficiencies to target for improvement.

Driving Demand

Recognizing that a communication system can't work unless everybody is on it, the Prisma Health team employed key strategies to drive user adoption across the organization.
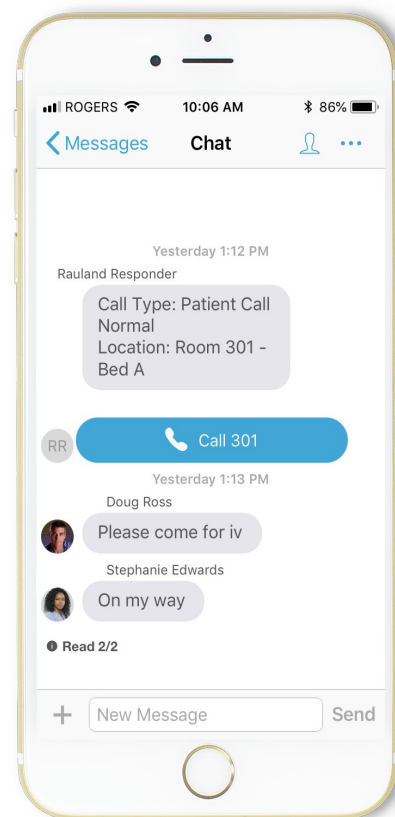
Intuitive Technology

The Technology Acceptance Model dictates that initiatives don't stand a chance unless users perceive the new technology to be both useful and easy to use. Selecting a user-friendly communication platform that is demonstrably better than existing solutions is the metaphorical price of admission. Don't bother moving forward unless the team can prove it has chosen a superior technology.

Multifunctional Participation

The strengths of most communication systems on the market generally lie on either the nursing or the physician side. Dr. Perkins and his team understood that both user groups were essential to the success of the program.

"We wanted to make sure we took the nursing workflow into consideration, but it had to work for our providers, too, or we knew they would never install the app," Dr. Perkins says. "Or, they'd install it for a week, hate it, and then uninstall it."

To select and implement a solution that worked for everyone, Prisma Health convened a multifunctional clinical team. Together, they mapped out every clinical workflow and recommended platform configurations accordingly. As the most-deployed cloud-based communication solution on both the nursing and physician side, Telmediq was an appropriate partner.

Multisite Communication

For this large health system with multiple locations, successful adoption also depended upon the ability to communicate across facilities. As Prisma Health brings more facilities onto the platform, Telmediq is easily able to scale up. The unified schedule and directory provide quick access to other users in the organization. Clinicians are able to facilitate transitions of care across locations

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with safe patient handoffs, as well as connect the hospital and ambulatory settings with direct communication between providers.
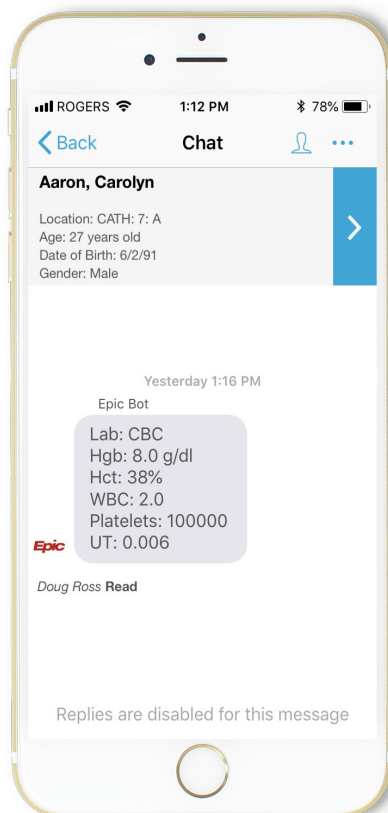
Administrative Endorsement

With a complex composite of employed and affiliated clinicians, it wasn't initially easy to bring technology-resistant clinicians on board. Senior leadership was enlisted to endorse the project and make it clear that the new communication platform was not optional. A peer recommendation is not always enough to sway technology-averse colleagues.

"We had to get the right champions and department leadership to help push us over the finish line, but we got there," Dr. Perkins says.

Formal Messaging Policies

Resistance often comes from clinicians who fear the new communication platform will result in a constant barrage of texts and alerts. Prisma Health alleviated fears with its paging protocol, which prevents indiscriminate messaging. It provides guidelines for when physicians can be paged, outlines the messaging chain of command, and sets expectations for appropriate response times.

Also critical was proper setup of message escalations and repeat alerts. Not every message must be read within 60 seconds—imagine the disruption of repeated non-urgent cell phone alerts while a physician is in an exam room with a patient. Prisma Health staggered escalations and alerts so that reminders were sent much less frequently for routine messaging.
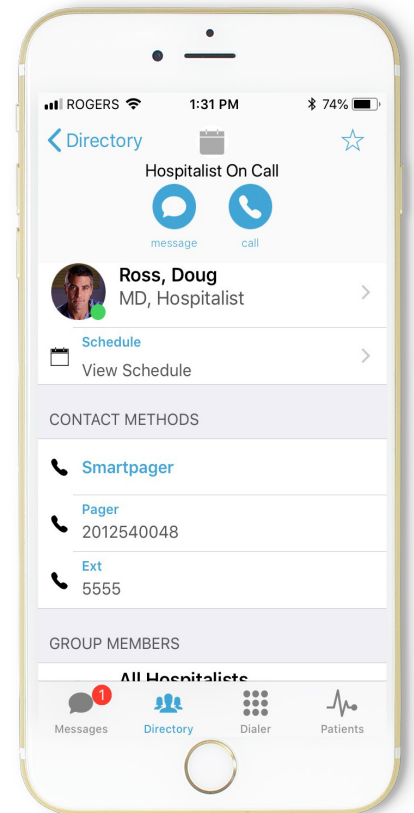
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Results at Work

With high patient volumes, Emergency Department throughput provides a representative point from which to examine results.

A common workflow, for example, is the initial request to contact a hospitalist. Under the old paging system, doctors would call out to a unit secretary on the ward to contact the hospitalist on call. The unit secretary would look up on-call doctors and schedules, page or call them, wait to be transferred, and then perhaps wait for a reply.

Their new Telmediq workflow requires only one message to the "Hospitalist On Call," which automatically connects to the right doctor based on the integrated call schedule. The message can include the patient's details via the EHR, it allows for a two-way conversation to be immediately initiated if desired, and it can be viewed by the patient's entire care team.

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Far beyond streamlining basic communication, Prisma Health's new Telmediq platform has eliminated collaboration inefficiencies, dramatically reduced care delays, and expedited patient throughput. It has improved not only patient satisfaction, but provider satisfaction as well.

"Most of the time when hospitals implement new technology, and if it's implemented for compliance reasons, it's not asked for," Dr. Perkins says. "With Telmediq, when people hear about it, they want it now."

About Telmediq

The No. 1 KLAS-rated vendor for secure communication platforms, Telmediq streamlines clinical communication and workflow so health systems can improve patient safety, throughput and satisfaction. The Telmediq healthcare communications hub pulls together disparate hospitals systems—EMR, lab, nurse call, clinical alarms, call centers and call schedules—into one powerful and integrated platform for HIPAA-compliant communication and care coordination. To learn more about the unique and recurring use cases of Telmediq in acute and ambulatory settings, download our use cases.

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