East Coast Hospital Reduces Costs and Extends Patient Care with Telehealth Collaboration Services

A top East Coast hospital and medical school, known for its leadership in highly specialized diagnostic and treatment programs, turns to Verizon Business for a solution to address financial challenges brought on by service demands.

Because of its reputation and expertise, the medical center’s specialists were regularly called away by affiliated hospitals for consultations, training, and patient diagnosis. The travel costs became unmanageable and with so many doctors on the road, the hospital’s successful team approach to comprehensive healthcare was at stake. Rather than cut budgets, the hospital’s new CIO turned to Verizon Business for a creative and cost saving answer.

Using its industry knowledge and the strength of its team of experts, Verizon Business delivered a telehealth collaboration solution that met the medical center’s consultation and training needs, while helping to reduce expenses.

Remote Consultations Jeopardized By Slowing Economy

Today, patients demand more of their healthcare professionals. In response, the medical center offers a collaborative approach to prevention and treatment. The backbone of its strategy — doctors who learn from each other by traveling to consult with distant colleagues.

This collaboration helped the medical center earn its reputation as an innovator, leading to more than 500,000 visits each year for care, diagnostics, and treatment. Its state-of-the-art laboratory services and top surgeons are also in demand for the more than 30,000 inpatients and 15,000 specialized and routine surgeries performed at the hospital each year.

The slowing economy, however, forced the hospital’s financial team to reassess its travel spending. This was of great concern to the medical staff, as a reduction in travel could jeopardize the medical center’s cutting-edge approach and hard-earned reputation.

Telehealth Solution Helps Doctors Reach More Patients

Understanding that remote work is a necessary part of providing medical services, the hospital’s CIO wanted a high-tech solution that could grow as the medical team’s needs evolved. Verizon Business had an existing relationship with the hospital and was called in to assess the situation.

The Verizon Business team listened, reviewed the issues, and prescribed a new telehealth collaboration solution designed specifically for the medical staff to collaborate over a Verizon IP network. Instead of traveling hours to visit a hospital, doctors can simply walk down the hall to a conference room to meet with their colleagues via a video link for a consult, training session, or patient diagnosis.

Working with Nortel, a leading equipment vendor, Verizon Business designed and equipped eight new immersive video conference rooms at the hospital and three rooms at remote affiliated hospitals.

**A Top Hospital and Medical School’s Collaboration Experience**

- Travel costs are reduced
- Specialist services are more accessible
- Patient health is more closely monitored, enabling more frequent or rapid intervention
- Medical education and professional collaboration is more proficient

Verizon provides services to over 17,000 enterprise customers across the healthcare ecosystem.
The solution, known as a managed telepresence service, provides real-time video with life-size visual communications that replicate face-to-face meetings.

The Verizon Business and Nortel virtual solution also offers complete set-up and management of high-definition video as well as video-bridging and gateway services. The medical center staff accesses all the features and functions of the video-bridging service through the Verizon Conferencing Private IP network, the public Internet, a traditional ISDN network, or any combination.

Team Approach Offers Unexpected Benefits
Like the medical center, Verizon Business prides itself on its experience and cost-saving services, and this solution utilizes both.

Nortel has an extensive network of Multimedia Network Operations Centers that work in combination with Verizon Business’ global private IP service to effectively manage video-enabled IP endpoints for customers. The solution also capitalizes on Verizon Business’s strength in the field of video networking. Verizon Business has more than 30 years experience and handles millions of conferences for its customers on a monthly basis.

Nortel also handles all meeting scheduling using a web-based reservation system, and provides maintenance and technical support. Verizon Business provided the design and engineering expertise.

With many creative solutions comes the need for creative financing, and this solution was no different. So Verizon Business teamed with the CIO to explore funding options for the $1.9 million project.

Able to show that the telehealth collaboration solution offered more efficient and effective ways to work together, Verizon Business helped the medical center’s financial team obtain a $700,000 grant for “collaborative medicine” to fund the three conference rooms at the affiliated hospitals.

New Protocol Delivers Positive Results
The resulting savings from travel expenses was a major consideration in their ROI analysis and sustainability plan. The medical center has already saved thousands since introducing the telehealth collaboration solution. Other key benefits are new training opportunities and expanded patient services.

The medical center was able to expand its patient services because doctors do not have to transfer patients to other hospitals for specialized care. They easily confer with specialists by using the new system. This improved quality of care increases patient satisfaction while allowing the hospital to retain revenue previously lost when patients are sent elsewhere.

The solution also helped the medical center meet its training needs. For example, it allows larger groups across multiple locations to virtually attend and participate in training sessions. This new approach to meetings has also improved attendance and helped increase productivity.

In addition, for doctors that teach and must continue to travel, they now can conduct remote daily rounds with their team of interns using their telehealth collaboration services.

The Verizon Business solution also improved interdepartmental communications at the medical center. It’s purchasing department and IT resource center are more than a mile from the medical center but staffs at the hospital and at off-site offices can now easily communicate and work together more effectively.

Today, hospital staff happily report that their conference rooms are constantly booked and 13 more customized conference rooms are being planned. And the hospital recently purchased portable carts with Verizon Business data jacks for remote and in-room diagnostics. The cart enables physicians to examine and diagnose remotely located patients in real-time.

Finally, the hospital is working its new collaboration capabilities into another grant application. If successful, the hospital will use the grant money to generate revenue by expanding its cardiac diagnosticians — via telehealth collaboration — to reach medical centers that do not have cardiac specialists on staff.

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More than 90% of Fortune 1000 healthcare companies rely on Verizon communication and network services.