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In-room computers and wall-mounted Proximity Systems Computer WorkStations deliver increased efficiency; improved patient care

Centerpoint Medical Center and Houston-based Proximity Systems WorkStations: one year later

HOUSTON (October 13, 2008) – One year after installing 400 Proximity Systems Computer WorkStations, Centerpoint Medical Center offers favorable reviews and cites reasons why the customized, wall-mounted, retractable computer workstations are satisfying the needs of the hospital’s nurses, physicians, patients, IT department and designers.

When Nashville-based Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) was in the planning and design stages for Independence, Missouri’s Centerpoint Medical Center, the decision was made to place computers in each patient room of the 258-bed, level-2 trauma facility. “From a patient care; a convenience and a life-of-computer perspective, we decided that each patient room should be wired,” said Shannan Pfeiffer, Centerpoint’s Director of Information Technology and Services.

Improving efficiency was the key goal, according to Pfeiffer, but the concept also worked with important safety initiatives. Electronic Medical Records (EMR), for example, are used to validate “right patient, right drug, right dose, right time” before medications are administered. By placing the computers in the room this validation can be done quickly and accurately.

One thing the planning team wanted to avoid, however, was losing the personal interaction between caregiver and patient when the nurse was in the room reviewing records or charting care and medication. “We wanted to make sure our nurses were still talking to the patient and not to the computer,” says Pfeiffer. The computers needed to be positioned to allow for the best possible face-to-face interaction. “In one respect it’s just a matter of being polite and not turning your back on someone,” she explains. On another level, when positioned correctly, patient and caregiver engage in a real conversation and communication is improved. The computer moves from the focus of the interaction to the background and becomes secondary.

Positioning Flexibility Improves Communication

To achieve the correct positioning in each room, Centerpoint turned to Proximity Systems, a national designer and manufacturer of wall-mounted, retractable hospital computer workstations based in Houston, Texas. HCA had conducted a product evaluation and Proximity Systems was selected as the vendor of choice for wall-mounted computer workstations for HCA hospitals in the Midwest.

Centerpoint opted for the Multi Compartment Computer Workstations using a combination of design options customized to their needs. The Multi Compartment series separates the flat panel monitor and keyboard from the PC. Computer equipment is protected behind the lockable upper (or lower) compartment door while the monitor and keyboard remain easily accessible. The WorkStation opens when needed and then closes to within inches of the wall freeing up valuable space. The swivel option allows face-face interaction even in tight spaces. "Many of our nurses, who initially weren't aware of the feature when we first opened, now like having that face-to-face interaction," says Pfeiffer. Centerpoint also selected an integrated med cabinet for patient safety and staff convenience.

The in-room hospital computer workstations from Proximity Systems are also scoring high with physicians according to Pfeiffer. She explains that they originally did not deploy access to the hospital's PACS on the in-room computers, but this was a subsequent and direct physician request. Now physicians use records and access to the PACS as a tool in their interactions for better patient education and understanding. The positioning of the computer screen, provided for by the Proximity WorkStation, allows the patient to view the screen comfortably during these in-room conferences.

Fewer Steps Improve Efficiency

The in-room computers and Proximity WorkStations are also playing an important role in increasing efficiency at Centerpoint. "We are a new hospital with all private rooms," says Pfeiffer. "The rooms are also larger, so the steps between patients have increased for our nurses."

The option of using computers on carts to reduce the distance nurses walked was quickly dismissed. "We had a few mobile units in our (other) hospitals but found that they take quite a beating running up and down the halls," Pfeiffer explained. Proximity WorkStations, on the other hand, were proven in an independent study to reduce the distance nurses walk by up to 80% and since the units are stationary they do not place added wear and tear on the computers. The in-room computers and WorkStations eliminate the need to go back to the Nurse's Station to chart, get information or pick-up certain supplies. "The intent was to improve efficiency," says Pfeiffer. "I think hospital leadership would agree we've achieved that goal."

Efficiency and Aesthetics Move Throughout Hospital

Four hundred Proximity WorkStations have been deployed throughout Centerpoint from: patient rooms and the Emergency Department; to lounges and public areas. The space-saving benefits even lead to the WorkStations being used in the Human Resource Department where they allow candidates to apply online. After the candidate uses the computer, the Proximity WorkStation closes to within inches of the wall, freeing up valuable department space.



According to Pfeiffer, the look of the Proximity Computer WorkStations provided another benefit. "In opening this new hospital we were very in tune with everything related to design." The wood construction and custom finish of the Proximity WorkStations allowed Centerpoint to achieve the desired consistent look, complimenting the furniture throughout the hospital.

One Year Later

A year after opening, Centerpoint has seen the benefits envisioned during the 3-year planning and construction process, become a reality. Many team members, vendors and solutions have played a part in this ongoing success story. Among them, Proximity WorkStations have improved efficiency, through saving time and reducing the distances nurses walk. The units have helped improve record accuracy, communication and patient education. The WorkStation's design aesthetic has also contributed to the hospital's overall professional look and image.

Pfeiffer however, points out yet another benefit. "The units were installed and we've had no product failures or quality issues," she says. That means little to no management or service time has been required to attend to the units. "The Proximity WorkStations were installed and they do their job. In that respect, it has also been great," she concludes.

About Proximity Systems, Inc.

Founded in 1993, Proximity Systems (www.proximitysystems.com) is a privately-held, Houston-based company that custom designs and manufactures wall mounted, retractable hospital computer workstations that enhance the ability of healthcare professionals to provide quality patient care while improving efficiency and optimizing the use of floor space in healthcare environments. Proximity Systems has built a reputation for dedicated and detailed customer service while working with more than 1,000 leading healthcare facilities across North America. Proximity WorkStations are strategically placed in multiple locations in healthcare facilities and are currently in use in Patient & Exam Rooms, ERs, ORs, ICUs, PACS and other healthcare settings. When not in use, Proximity WorkStations retract, or close, to within inches of the wall, securing equipment, protecting patient privacy and freeing up valuable facility floor space. All Proximity WorkStations feature durable wood construction and curved edges for improved safety, hygiene and longevity.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Photos available upon request.