

A Year of Progress: The Benefits of Wall Mounted Workstations in a 258 Bed Facility

Case Study



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Introduction

When Nashville-based Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) was in the planning and design stages for Centerpoint Medical Center, located in Independence, Missouri, they decided to place computers in each patient room of the 258-bed, level-two 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,” Pfeiffer said.

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,” Pfeiffer said.



OVERVIEW

400 wall-mounted workstations were deployed throughout the 258-bed facility.

USE

Workstations were installed in patient rooms, the ER, lounges, public areas and the HR department.

BENEFITS ACHIEVED AFTER 1 YEAR

Improved efficiency, record accuracy, communication, patient education and patient safety.



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. HCA had conducted a product evaluation, and selected Proximity Systems as the vendor of choice for its wall-mounted workstations, which it would implement in HCA hospitals in the Midwest.

Centerpoint opted for the multi-compartment workstations, using a combination of design options customized to their needs. The multi-compartment series separates the flat-panel monitor and keyboard from the CPU. 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,” Pfeiffer said.

Centerpoint also selected an integrated med cabinet for patient safety and staff convenience. The in-room computers and Proximity workstations score high with physicians, according to Pfeiffer. She said they originally did not deploy access to the hospital’s PACS on the in-room computers, but it 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 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 also play an important role in increasing efficiency at Centerpoint.

“We are a new hospital with all private rooms,” Pfeiffer said. “The rooms are also larger, so the steps between patients have increased for our nurses.”

“We wanted to make sure our nurses were still talking to the patient and not to the computer”

Shannan Pfeiffer, Centerpoint’s Director of Information Technology and Services

“The intent was to improve efficiency. I think hospital leadership would agree we’ve achieved that goal.”

Shannan Pfeiffer, Centerpoint’s Director of Information Technology and Services

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 said.

Proximity workstations, on the other hand, were proven in an independent study to reduce the distance nurses walk by up to 80%. Plus, 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,” Pfeiffer said. “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 and emergency rooms to lounges and public areas. The space-saving benefits even led to the workstations being used in the human resources 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 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, complementing the furniture throughout the hospital.

One Year Later

A year after opening, Centerpoint has seen the benefits envisioned during the three-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.”

In other words, 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,” Pfeiffer said.

“We had a few mobile units in our (other) hospitals but found that they take quite a beating running up and down the halls.”

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