Allegiance Health

Jackson, Michigan USA

We've searched and searched, and are happy to report that, to our knowledge, we are responsible for the longest-running RTLS application in healthcare. One of our first installations, Allegiance Health (formerly Foote Hospital) has been using the Versus Information System® for 17 years!

Allegiance Health Installation Highlights:

- **1. 411-bed Facility**
- **2. 54,502 Annual ED Visits**
- **3. Installed VIS™ in 1991**
- **2 expansions since**
- **Our longest running site**
- **The Radiology Department routes over 1,000 calls per day to physicans and technicians.**
- **The Central Scheduling Department (located offsite) uses Versus to place ≈ 60% of its calls.**
- **Reduced the number of pagers and noise level, increasing patient and staff satisfaction.**

"We were attracted to the Versus system because it is so easy to use. VIS has proven an invaluable resource for our department."

Randy Bardwell, Manager
Imaging Services Department

Problems with Paging

Prior to 1991, staff in the Imaging Services Department at Allegiance Health (Jackson, MI) were growing frustrated with the incessant phone calls and their inability to locate the physicians and staff who requested that they be found immediately. Even finding staff under non-emergent conditions—to seek clarification of instructions, track down patient information or inquire about the patient's location was problematic. In turn, physicians and staff were frustrated at their inability to find staff in the department when they were tracking down results, questioning a scan read or attempting to schedule a new scan.

Clinicians are busy and mobile and are not always able to immediately respond to pages. It doesn't seem to matter whether pages are sent to a beeper or over a loud-speaker, if they register with the intended recipient at all, they are still too easily forgotten. Of greater concern, system pages are loud and obtrusive, raising the decibel level in treatment and recovery areas where patients are trying to rest and relax.

Bringing Versus Onboard

Allegiance Health needed a more efficient way for staff to locate and communicate with one another. Enter VIS™, the only RTLS that uses infrared (IR) and radio-frequency identification (RFID) across a dedicated network to accurately locate patients, staff and equipment.

The Versus Information System, VIS, allows staff at Allegiance Health to quickly locate one another, whether it is for a direct connect or to transfer a call. With VIS, Allegiance Health staff have virtually eliminated the inefficiencies related to phone tag and the by-foot pursuit of staff in order to answer a simple question. VIS has decreased call transfer times by several minutes per call which makes front line staff more productive and allows them to promptly greet patients.

Randy Bardwell, Manager of the Imaging Services Department at Allegiance Health explains, "We were attracted to the Versus system

it is so easy to use. We use it throughout the Imaging Services Department to locate key staff by phone number and location. It is so simple to just look at the monitor and be able to obtain this information. Versus has proven an invaluable resource for our department."

Since the initial installation at the 411-bed facility, Allegiance Health has undergone two expansions of the Versus real-time location information system. "Versus has been exceptional to work with. Over the years, our facility has grown, and thus our department volume has increased tremendously. The Versus system has helped us manage our growth and keep in sync with one another as processes have changed, and as people have come and gone."

Staying Power

Today, Versus Advantages are used by the Imaging Services Department and the Centralized Scheduling Department. "It allows us to interact with one another more efficiently and in a timely manner," Bardwell says. "Which is important," Lyn Shoquist, Supervisor and Database Administrator for Patient Scheduling adds. "When you have an irate doctor on the phone questioning a diagnosis, you had better be able to find the radiologist—and fast." By removing the time lapse between the attempt to contact and actual contact, Versus helps staff to follow-up on details related to patient care, status and scheduling when they are fresh in mind and easily recalled. This helps to prevent errors and the need for additional phone calls.

"We are a centralized scheduling department, but located offsite," says Shoquist, "so it is essential that we be able to find a radiologist or technician or even Randy Bardwell—especially when we have same day add-ons." The scheduling department has benefited from the Versus system in that they are now able to locate physicians and staff during the scheduling process if issues arise. "We use the Versus system every day," Shoquist says, "but on those crazy, bad days—that's when we really appreciate it. On those days, we use Versus to place probably 60% of our calls."

Timely Transfers

The Versus system helps to enhance satisfaction among patients, staff, physician offices and vendors. According to Bardwell, "By being able to locate staff more quickly, we have been able to speed up response time and the transfer of information. Internal and external phone calls are processed more quickly simply because we are able to route them to the right person in the right location on the first attempt." Staff save a tremendous amount of time, simply in not having to look up multiple phone numbers. This is not to mention all the time they save on multiple, unnecessary phone calls—which invariably cause interruption to the answering party.

Efficient communication directly affects patient care and satisfaction. When patients are waiting for a report on their tests, they don't wait unnecessarily. As an added bonus, Allegiance Health has been able to reduce not only the number of beepers, but also the noise attributed to beepers going off and persistent paging over the loud-speaker system. Patients and staff alike are happier with that.

"To allot our resources, not to mention the time and energy we'd have to invest, to manually do the things that VIS does automatically…well, I just can't imagine it," Bardwell says. "We rely on the Versus system on a daily basis; it's integral to the way we function."

Versus looks forward to another 17 years of service to Allegiance Health!

Staff Love the System

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Lyn Shoquist
Supervisor & Database Administrator for Patient Scheduling

Quickly Locate Staff

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About Allegiance Health
Allegiance Health is a regional healthcare provider serving people in the Michigan counties of Jackson, Hillsdale, Lenawee, Ingham, Calhoun and Washtenaw. Comprehensive health services in many locations assure that healthcare excellence is available close to home.

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