



Case Study



COLUMBIA ORTHOPAEDIC GROUP

“Our patient satisfaction surveys showed an increase of approximately 20% after we moved to the new building and after the paging system was implemented.”

– Duane Epperson
IT Manager
Columbia Orthopaedic Group

INDUSTRY: Healthcare

PRODUCTS:

- Coaster Call Patient Paging System
- T74C232 Interface Transmitter

CLIENT PROFILE

COLUMBIA ORTHOPAEDIC GROUP

The Columbia Orthopaedic Group was organized in December of 1965 and is comprised of a group of 24 specialized physicians and surgeons devoted to the diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and prevention of injuries and diseases of the musculoskeletal system. For more than forty years, the group has delivered the finest in orthopaedic care to patients across Missouri and the Midwest.

CHALLENGE

Columbia Orthopaedic Group (COG) was using the traditional system of calling out patients’ names that were seated in the waiting room. Patients would check in at the front desk, complete paperwork and wait for their name to be called out. COG found that the calling out of names left some patients feeling uncomfortable knowing that others could identify them.

After patients completed their paperwork at check-in, the front desk staff would place the paperwork in a set of folders, indicating the patient was present. The nursing staff would have to keep watch of the folders, and would grab them as they appeared, then walk to the waiting room, and shout the patient’s name. COG found that too often staff would spend time looking for patients or would have to repeat the patient’s name as a portion of their patient population is older, some with hearing impairments.

As the group recently moved into its new state-of-the art 72,000 square feet Orthopaedic Institute, they re-examined their check-in and patient flow processes and wanted to investigate alternatives to using a “bullhorn” system. According to Duane Epperson, COG’s IT Manager “The [new] system had to be discrete, reliable, easy for the patients to understand and affordable.” Most critical, was that the system allowed for PC paging capabilities.

SOLUTION

Columbia Orthopaedic Group decided to use LRS’ Cool Blue Coaster patient paging system, along with the T74C232 transmitter that would be integrated with their own web-based application for PC paging functionalities.

System Components:

- 105 - Cool Blue Coasters
- 11 - Coaster Chargers
- 1 - T7400 Transmitter
- 1 - T74C232 Transmitter

System Installation:

One (1) T7400 transmitter, one hundred and five (105) Cool Blue Coasters and eleven (11) Coaster chargers were installed at the front desk area. COG developed their own web paging application to interface with the paging system. LRS’ T74C232 transmitter was connected to the web server hosting the web paging application. Each PC used by the nursing and front desk staff was equipped with the web enabled pager software application for patient paging and patient tracking.

System Implementation:

When the patient arrives, the front desk staff issues them a pager and on the web interface, enters the patient's name, pager number, and the physician they are scheduled to see. Instantly, this information is sent to the appropriate nursing staff's PC and they can click the "Page" button on their web application to send a page to the patient holding the coaster pager (vibrates) handed out to them at check-in. Once the page is sent, the patient name/pager is automatically removed from the list. At that point, the nursing staff waits at the clinical exam room doors for the patient to confirm their identity by name. The pagers are given back to the front desk staff for charging and re-use as the patients are led back to their exam room.

RESULTS

Improved Staff Efficiency

The system has streamlined COG's operations. "Our staff efficiency has seen a significant improvement. They are able to complete other tasks faster, since they are not constantly looking for paperwork and waiting for the patients to arrive. They simply glance at their web application every few minutes," comments Epperson.

Enhanced Patient Satisfaction

COG has seen an approximate 20% increase in patient satisfaction since moving into the new building and after implementing the paging system. Among other factors like the new waiting room, faster X-Ray equipment, etc., the patients have been pleased with the new paging system, appreciating the discretion, and the freedom it provides to walk around the lobby without having to listen for each name being called, and the quietness of the waiting area.

Increased Patient Privacy – HIPAA compliance

The paging system has allowed COG to provide greater privacy of patient information, complying with HIPAA's privacy regulation. Rather than using verbal communication and calling out the patient's name, patients simply receive a page and confirm their identity with the Nursing staff.

Track Patient Waiting Time

As the paging system has improved Nursing Staff workflow, and has given patients a more secure and personal experience, COG has also been able to track patient waiting time with their web paging application. According to Epperson, "We are able to determine exactly how long each patient waits, since we log the time the pager was given to them, and we log the time that the Nurse pages them. This has been a very useful tool in our ongoing quest for better patient care."

FUTURE

"We plan on using this system indefinitely. We are very satisfied with the functionality and would recommend it to others. We have had several other hospitals and healthcare providers ask about our paging system," says Epperson.



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Business Benefits

- Enhance Patient Satisfaction
- Increase Patient Privacy – HIPAA compliance
- Improve Staff Efficiency
- Track Patient Waiting Time