

## Streamlining Communication Improves Patient Care



The continual need for better security at hospitals, particularly around PHI, means many health system compliance departments are mandating that texting among staff is secure. This is what initially brought Thomas Hospital - Infirmary Health in Fairhope, Alabama, to Halo Communications. But the benefits of the Halo platform go far beyond just security.

Donna Nolte, MSN, CCRN, and Director of Nursing & Support Services at Thomas Hospital, says the time savings of using Halo is “amazing.” Because nurses are constantly on their feet, tracking someone down at a desk is nearly impossible. This leads to missed pages and callbacks, and the nurses constantly need to have a pen and paper to track information, which makes for a lot of unproductive time.

### WORKFLOW EFFICIENCY: COMMUNICATION SPEEDS UP

“What could be handled in one Halo message used to take 4-5 phone calls and excessive waiting. Now I can Halo the information – patient name, room and what needs to be done – and the responding nurse has all the information at her fingertips,” said Donna. “Information didn’t have to be written down on a piece of paper somewhere, reducing miscommunications or mistakes. And it keeps patient information safe.”

For what Donna calls a “straightforward, vanilla admission” of getting someone from the ER to a bed in the hospital, it used to take three phone calls and ten to twelve minutes. She said,



*With Halo I can complete the same activity with ZERO phone calls in about two minutes. We probably do twenty of those in one shift – so the times savings is huge!*



“With Halo I can complete the same activity with ZERO phone calls in about two minutes. We probably do twenty of those in one shift – so the times savings is huge!”

### NO MORE WAITING: IMMEDIATE AND SECURE CONTACT WITH ON-CALL STAFF

Knowing who is on-call is the bane of every health system’s existence. Tracking down the right clinician wastes time and causes delays in patient care. Thomas Hospital use of Halo Schedules lets them to connect with whomever is on-call in real-time.



*Physicians can just Halo the on-call house supervisor and it gets to the right person. There is no tracking down the schedule, paging someone who may or may not be on at the time, waiting for a call back.*



“Physicians can just Halo the on-call house supervisor and it gets to the right person,” said Donna. “There is no tracking down the schedule, paging someone who may or may not be on at the time, waiting for a call back. Not only is the message delivered to the correct person immediately, it is completely secure.”

Donna said the general surgeons at the hospital are also using scheduling very well. They have a call schedule and if there is a surgery need, someone is always available to respond. Another provider group has their office voicemail set up so if you reach them after-hours, it alerts the caller to send a message via Halo to get it to the physician on call. “It gets the information to the right person immediately, and the caller doesn’t need to use the after-hours call service to track a physician down,” she said.

#### **HIGH ADOPTION RATES: HOSPITALISTS HELP CREATE DEMAND**

Thomas Hospital did a great job influencing their employees to use Halo. They sought out early adopters and people who could benefit the most, especially the hospitalists.

“Hospitalists see about 70% of our patients, and once we got them on board using Halo, it just picked up speed with others who worked with them,” said Donna. “The more people used it, the more people signed up, so they didn’t miss out.”

Additionally, the staff has done a very good job making sure people learn Halo during onboarding. The health system has computer-based learning for new hires, and the Halo module is assigned to be completed so they understand not only how to use it, but the “etiquette” guidelines as well. For example, it is discouraged to follow up with a “thank you” or “ok” message, because neither add to the conversation. Once you see a Halo message is received and read, no follow up is necessary. “And you would never walk away from a conversation – at least in the south – without saying thank you,” Donna laughs. “It’s hard to break out of that with Halo!”