perfectserve

MERCYHEALTH
St. Rita's Medical Center

Health System: Mercy Health

Location: Lima, OH

Size: 419 beds

Medical Staff: 1,000+

Key Result: Decreased stroke patient time-to-treatment; increased patient safety levels

St. Rita's Medical Center reduces stroke time-to-treatment with real-time communication technology

Time-to-treatment is critical when dealing with stroke patients. That's why St. Rita's Medical Center, the largest hospital in a 70-mile radius from its campus in Lima, OH, decided to address variations in its stroke team response times.

The Joint Commission and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association® advocate that a stroke patient's time-to-treatment follow these guidelines as closely as possible:

- CT scans should be interpreted within 45 minutes of the patient's arrival at the hospital
- tPA should be administered within a 60-minute window for maximum effectiveness

Like many hospitals of its size, St. Rita's used the overhead intercom to initiate code alerts. That process considerably slowed down the stroke team's response times and delayed these critical care milestones.

In theory, overhead paging is an efficient way to contact all stroke team members at once, and should have reduced the time it took for team members to arrive. But in practice, the clinicians who needed to respond didn't always hear the alerts—especially if they were consulting with another patient when the alerts went out. That meant nurses would have to contact each team member manually, leading to even longer delays in patient care.

St. Rita's knew they needed to streamline this process and equip their stroke team with a more effective alert system. And, they were able to leverage a care team communication technology they already had in place.

A new look at PerfectServe's capabilities

Several years prior, St. Rita's implemented PerfectServe to reduce communication cycle times between its clinicians. After seeing significant success in streamlining communication workflows and reducing time-to-treatment for noncritical patient care, hospital leadership decided to enhance their PerfectServe investment with the care team alerts module.

Now, instead of receiving code stroke event notifications over the intercom, each member of St. Rita's stroke team — which consists of rapid response nurses, physicians, nursing supervisors, nurse practitioners, radiologists and managers, along with admissions and patient placement professionals — is immediately notified by the simple touch of a button through the PerfectServe mobile or desktop application.

"St. Rita's code stroke team relies on PerfectServe technology to ensure timely response to patients requiring fast and effective care," said Jolene Marshall, a stroke and neurology resource clinician at St. Rita's Medical Center.

Because a process for using PerfectServe throughout the hospital was already in place, implementing care team alerts for the stroke team was simply a matter of setting up the communication rules for each team member. Now that they receive immediate notification of emergent clinical events, St. Rita's stroke team has stabilized and improved rapid care team response times.

And they didn't stop there.

With positive feedback from the stroke team, St. Rita's leadership enhanced the care team alert functionality even further by adding a component that gives clinicians the ability to send additional alerts to the team — such as notifying them when the stroke patient is receiving tPA and needs to be transferred to the ICU. They've also expanded the team to include pharmacy staff in order to expedite the mixing of time-sensitive medications.

The stroke team credits PerfectServe's interactive, real-time mobile call schedule, contact method and status management features for enabling them to quickly and easily exchange clinical information via their smartphones or Web portal.

"With the time sensitivity involving stroke patients, PerfectServe has provided

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>
> **Jolene Marshall,**
> Stroke and neurology resource clinician at St. Rita's Medical Center

our team with an efficient notification process that has allowed us to reduce patient care delays and attend to the patients' needs in a more effective and timely manner," Marshall said.

Surpassing time-to-treatment goals

In addition to following The Joint Commission's CT scan and tPA administration guidelines, St. Rita's also wanted to implement response time rules for its stroke team members to follow.

They decided that, at a minimum:

- Physicians should arrive at a stroke patient's bedside within 10 minutes of the patient's ED arrival;

- A CT scan for that patient should be ordered within 15 minutes; and

- Results of the CT scan, in addition to other tests and blood work, should be completed and available for physician review within 45 minutes.

Since the implementation of PerfectServe's care team alerts, stroke patients at St. Rita's are evaluated by a physician and set to receive the necessary scans and tests in about 10 minutes. These low time-to-treatment ratios have surpassed industry standards and remain critical to the stroke team's success in patient care and safety.

"Without PerfectServe," Marshall added, "I'm not sure if it would be possible to make our various stroke timelines. This unified, comprehensive platform addresses our needs and secures the communications to the entire code stroke team."