



# Catholic Health

## Smart Console 4.5 Helps Four-Campus Hospital System Overhaul Messaging Process and Improve Patient Response

### THE CHALLENGE

The staff at Catholic Health had reached the breaking point with its aging system for mission-critical messaging. With a network of 1,600 pagers and dozens of code groups for both critical and non-critical notifications, Catholic Health's hardware-based approach had become error-prone and difficult to support. Each of the four hospitals in the system also had different paging procedures, which was problematic when operators floated to cover shifts in different facilities.

To send a page, operators used a keyboard entry device with a tiny screen to scroll through dozens of code group options in search of the right one. "It was stressful for operators and impacted our ability to respond to patient needs quickly," said Robert Graves, Telecommunications Support Specialist II at Catholic Health. "We had about one error each week with codes going to the wrong group. We needed to fix the problem."

This hardware was also sensitive to other devices. "We couldn't place a walkie-talkie near the modem without the paging system freezing," Graves said. "But we wouldn't know there was a problem until an operator tried to send a page. It would take several minutes to reboot and get the page out."

Additionally, Graves and his team had to keep spare pagers programmed with various configurations of code groups, which was a manual, time-intensive, and costly process.

### THE SOLUTION

"Selecting Smart Console from Amcom was an easy choice for us," Graves said. "It's a great fit with its scalability and the ease of adding other applications without needing more hardware. Smart Console is a good foundation to build on for messaging, Web-based directories, emergency notification, nurse call integration, and other communication initiatives we see in our future."

How it works: For critical pages, a clinical staff member presses a wall button in a patient's room. This triggers an alarm light in the operator area notifying all operators of the location of the emergency. If a wall button is not available, clinicians call an emergency line that bypasses all other calls in the operator queue.

Operators use the Smart Alert feature of Smart Console to track the receipt of each page and can enact a backup procedure if a page doesn't go through. "This is particularly beneficial because we know if a page failed, we can take action to speed patient response time," Graves said.

Another helpful feature is the ability to add frequently requested information in the software's Miscellaneous tab. "Operators can add notes on florists, hotels, taxis, directions, and anything else to provide helpful information to callers more quickly," Graves said.

Catholic Health operators can also leverage the newly consolidated employee directory through Smart Console. Graves said, "It's the first time operators have had a single, reliable source of employee contact information. Previously it was through binders, sticky notes, and random pieces of paper."

### OVERVIEW

Formed in 1998 under four religious sponsors, Catholic Health provides healthcare to hundreds of thousands of people in Western New York state across a network of four hospital sites, 14 primary care centers, six diagnostic and treatment centers, a freestanding surgery center, six long-term care facilities, two adult homes, three home care agencies, and several other community ministries.

### INDUSTRY

- Healthcare

### CALL CENTERS: 4

### OPERATORS: 40

### BUSINESS DRIVERS

- Improve patient care and response times.
- Implement a technology foundation that would work with future communication initiatives.
- Alleviate operator stress with a reliable process for sending code pages.
- Simplify support and leverage common procedures across four locations.

### SOLUTION

- Amcom™ Smart Console™ 4.5

### RESULTS

- Fast, simple, and reliable process for sending critical code pages.
- Eliminated the need for numerous backup pagers with complex code group programming.
- Operators have a common, intuitive system that the Telecommunications team can easily support.
- Single, reliable source of information to support mission-critical communications.



“The Amcom system is really improving the service we can offer our physicians, staff, patients, and visitors. It helps us provide that human touch.”

Robert Graves  
Telecommunications Support Specialist II, Catholic Health

#### THE RESULTS

Today Catholic Health uses Smart Console in a variety of ways to make their operations more efficient and improve care. “We’ve saved time and money, and have increased our flexibility tremendously,” Graves said. “From a support standpoint, it is far easier having a common system for the four hospitals. There is no training required, and this helps to keep stress low for our operators when they float among the facilities.”

Catholic Health has also reduced pager expenses by eliminating a large number of pre-programmed backups. Graves is happy to be able to add people to code groups on the fly. “Since we launched Smart Console, we’ve added four new code groups in a very short amount of time.”

Graves says the 40 operators are pleased with how intuitive the Amcom system is to use. Doctors are also happy that the telecommunications team can quickly configure their profiles to default to a PDA, Blackberry® device, pager, etc. for non-critical pages.

Additionally, Smart Console has shed light on the expense of paging and pagers. “Now we have a way to monitor how often operators are asked to launch pages, which will give us benchmarks for evaluating our process and potentially the need for additional applications. We saw an immediate ROI by allowing users to have non-critical codes sent directly to their Blackberry or Smartphone devices, resulting in

the opportunity for them to turn in their pagers if they wished to do so. At \$10 per month per pager and \$1 per message group, that added up quickly.”

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