INTRODUCTION

Phelps Memorial Health Center (PMHC) is a progressive family-centered health care provider serving the residents in the communities in Phelps County, Nebraska. Founded in 1968, Phelps Memorial provides emergency, surgical, imaging and children's services and has specialty clinics in cardiology, ENT, nephrology, PB/GYN, oncology, orthopedics, podiatry, pediatric cardiology, pulmonary and urology.

THE CHALLENGE

To enable more effective, yet secure communications among its physicians, nurses and other clinical staff, PMHC implemented a text messaging product for use on smartphones. However, the organization then realized there was one critical requirement the product didn't deliver – integration with MEDITECH, its healthcare information system, enabling clinicians to retrieve important patient data it contains and message that data to one another. That's when PMHC replaced the product with NetRelay, a healthcare communications platform from Interbit Data offering secure text messaging and other features to improve message delivery, workflow and tracking across healthcare facilities. PMHC looked at a number of different messaging solutions, but chose NetRelay because of its ability to integrate quickly and easily with MEDITECH and with NetDelivery, Interbit Data's hospital data exchange solution.

THE SOLUTION

"NetRelay contains all the secure messaging features we were looking for, including image capture and indexing to EMRs, but it was NetRelay's integration capabilities that really sold us and gave it the edge over other products," said Andrew Van Campen, Director of IT, Phelps Memorial Health Center. "Also, since NetRelay was in its early stages at the time we implemented it, the product's developers were happy to add certain features that would further meet our needs. Having our input taken into consideration with the ongoing product development was huge for us."

Implementing NetRelay was quick and easy, taking less than two days, and PMHC rolled it out to 70 clinicians' smartphones in the same week. As soon as the initial application setup was complete, the majority of clinicians were up-to-speed on using the product. All physicians, nurses, lab technicians and emergency room staff at the hospital are using NetRelay. The staff is a mix of iPhone and Android users, which doesn't pose a problem as NetRelay is compatible with both platforms.

Enabling Easy Integration for Efficient Message Delivery

NetRelay takes information from any HCIS and turns it into a message that can be sent to mobile devices, NetRelay Messaging Consoles and/or through NetDelivery to email, fax, EMRs, etc. NetRelay seamlessly integrates with healthcare information system applications, requiring no interfaces.

With NetRelay, PMHC obtained the ability it needed to automatically send out patient information such as critical lab values and radiology values that are stored in MEDITECH, delivering alerts to the physicians or nurses who need the information.

"The lab, ER, and nurses need to send critical values and other patient information to the physicians, often requiring a response or acknowledgement that the message was received," explained Van Campen. "With NetRelay, the information is communicated securely as well as efficiently to clinicians' smartphones, and message responses and acknowledgements can be made quickly and easily. All the staff members who are using NetRelay are loving it."

PMHC nursing staff who work in the field providing homecare find NetRelay most beneficial. They can document and photograph wounds and other patient issues, sending the information and images securely to physicians at the hospital and to patients' medical records.

CONCLUSION

"NetRelay is a very well-built communications platform that operates consistently, which is a big advantage for us," said Van Campen. "We wanted a secure messaging solution that has all the functionality we need yet is user-friendly, and that's what we got with NetRelay. It's really a simple product that offers more bang for the buck than other, similar products, plus it provides the integration we needed with our HCIS. As Interbit Data continues to develop NetRelay, it's just going to get better and better."