

Regional hospital group replaces ‘ill’ phone system with modern, efficient VoIP telephony

Cascade Valley Hospital and Clinics, a fast-growing medical group that operates a hospital and eight primary and specialty care clinics, is based in Arlington, Wash., about 40 miles north of Seattle. The City of Arlington, whose current population of about 15,000 represents a growth rate of more than 400% over the past two decades.

The city and surrounding areas not only provides residents with a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities but has developed a solid base of commercial, manufacturing and retail businesses that has helped create an average of 2.2 jobs per local household.

As the region has grown and prospered, Cascade Valley Hospital (CVH&C) has grown, as well, building on a long tradition of delivering community-responsive health care. In fact, the hospital is in the midst of completing a major fund-raising and expansion project timed to coincide with the organization’s 100th anniversary in 2009. Thanks to its network of outreach and specialty clinics, CVH&C now employs a medical staff of about 100 and total staff of about 425.

Stepping up to the future

All that growth strained the hospital’s communication capabilities, however. By 2008, CVH&C was maintaining about 300 telephones, part of an aging PBX system that was nearing the end of its functional lifespan.

“Our system was almost 20 years old,” said Scott Meyers, the hospital’s IS Project Coordinator. “We no longer had suitable support, and we didn’t have a handle on whether the system could be expanded or accommodate new lines.”

Plus, CVH&C’s off-site clinics were being served by a number of different key systems, complicating internal communications. Meyers and his team knew that the hospital and clinics needed a modern telephone system, one that could provide four-digit internal dialing and a common telephone and voicemail platform.

A wealth of benefits

The hospital hired the Moss Bay Group, a Western Washington-based IT and VoIP consulting organization, to assess the project and submitted an RFP. To win the contract, All Phase had to compete with such industry players as NEC, Avaya, Cisco and Mitel. In the end, All Phase beat out Avaya for the business.

All Phase technicians went to work, installing a ShoreTel VoIP system that facilitated a common communications platform for the entire hospital and all of its clinics, scheduling the switchover so as to minimize any interruptions to the hospital and clinics’ telecom and patient care service.



The challenge

Cascade Valley Hospital and Clinics was saddled with an aging PBX phone system, and the hospital’s off-site clinics were served by several different key systems. CVH&C needed a modern system that could grow with the organization, seamlessly support its eight outlying clinics and deliver the reliability essential to the organization’s role as preferred provider of acute health care services for a growing regional population.

The solution

All Phase installed a VoIP system that provided four-digit internal dialing, a common communications platform for the main hospital and its eight off-site clinics and the capability to perform internal adds, moves and changes quickly and easily. The hospital can now self-administer its telecom system, which helps to reduce ongoing operating expenses.

The benefits

The key benefits of the All Phase system included:

- Improved communications, with internal four-digit dialing
- Ability to transfer between departments and sites
- Common voicemail platform
- Unified messaging
- High degree of mobility
- Reduced carrier service costs with a new dial-tone provider



As a result, the hospital and clinics now have a modern telecom system in place that allows for adds, moves and changes to the phone system to be done internally and delivers several key benefits, including:

- Improved communications with internal four-digit dialing
- Ability to transfer between departments and sites
- Common voicemail platform and unified messaging
- A high degree of mobility
- Reduced carrier costs from switching to a new dial-tone provider

Shortening the learning curve

Several features of the ShoreTel VoIP system that All Phase installed were essential to the hospital and clinics, Meyers said.

“One critical component was the paging system,” he noted. “All Phase was able to fully integrate the system’s paging capabilities with our existing paging system. Now, staff can easily page all the new handsets, which is essential for locating hospital or clinic personnel.”

Another key feature was the electronic directory provided with the new system, which does not have to be manually updated the way the previous system required. Plus, Meyers noted that the directory provides fast, reliable access to a variety of external resources, such as pharmacies and medical transport services.

Perhaps most important, management and staff raved about the integrated Call Manager built into the ShoreTel system.

“Call Manager allows us to quickly review on-screen call information, check the address book and route incoming calls with ease,” Meyers explained. “The interface is highly functional and easy to learn, which is important for a smaller organization such as ours. We want to keep our focus on personalized patient services, so it was important that any new technology have a short learning curve.”

Meyers added that one of the areas most appreciated by staff and managers was the on-site support and troubleshooting provided by All Phase. For example: CVH&C needed to integrate all of its old fax machines with the new digital system and implement “group pickup options” that would allow staff to answer handsets other than their own that might be ringing in the immediate area.

“Those were tasks where we really leaned to appreciate the support we got from All Phase,” Meyers said. “They were responsive and unafraid to escalate the issue to ShoreTel for quick resolution when necessary.”

“We’re happy to have a telecom system that’s functional, easy to manage and fully supported if we have problems.”

“For us to provide the best possible patient care, we needed the best telecom technology. With All Phase, we now have a system that’s functional, easy to manage and fully supported whenever we have problems.”

Scott Meyers

Cascade Valley Hospital and Clinics
IS Project Coordinator

The goals

- Improve customer service by answering incoming calls quickly and efficiently
- Reduce operating expenses for carrier services
- Implement a telecom system that could expand to match hospital’s growth
- Provide unified messaging and inter-departmental communications
- Complete project with minimal disruption to services and communications
- Ensure a short learning curve for hospital and clinics staff and managers

The advantages

Cascade Valley Hospital and Clinics not only replaced an outdated system that was cumbersome and expensive to maintain, but was able to increase its communications efficiency and significantly reduce its operating costs.

**Contact All Phase to learn more about VoIP for your company, 206-363-3100.
www.allphasecom.com**