

Case Study

Central Hospital – Central Lisbon

Workflow Optimization For A Return On Investment

About CHLC

Central Lisbon Central Hospital (Centro Hospitalar Lisboa Central – CHLC), one of the largest healthcare providers in Portugal features four locations, world-class facilities and a network of highly-skilled staff. However, as with many publicly funded organizations, they have faced increased pressure in recent years to see more patients without a corresponding increase in resources. As a result, the staff at CHLC has been focused on increasing productivity and making more efficient use of existing resources.

Before Connexall

CHLC was faced with a series of processes that were not very flexible, highly complex and crucial to patient health and safety. Any solutions that they eventually implemented could not compromise safety or patient health in any way. This made it fairly difficult to radically redesign procedures.

In collaboration with the Connexall Europe Team, the staff at CHLC performed a comprehensive systemic analysis to find areas in which redesigned workflow and technology could have a substantial impact on productivity. At the end of that process, they targeted three areas: simplifying OR processes where possible; improving inter-hospital patient transfers; and accelerating responses to staff and patient requests for supplies and services.

“Connexall helped lower the ‘bottleneck’ effect of our communication strategy. It optimizes communications and reduces waiting times.”

– Mercedes Bilbao
Chief Operating Nurse CHLC, Lisbon, Portugal

The Connexall Solution

Connexall is used in the pediatric operating department at the Hospital D. Estefânia and the Vascular Surgery department at the Hospital de Santa Marta to handle staff and supply requests more efficiently. The staff at CHLC found that the average time per request was reduced by about three and a half minutes, through better workflow and information immediacy. After going live in April 2008, CHLC calculated that this project alone saved them 490 OR hours, or a total of 96,000 Euros – in one year.

Requests made via overhead paging and one-off phone calls have been virtually eliminated; OR nurses simply make request via the OR computer by clicking a button. Mobile staff with wireless phones simply acknowledge or escalate requests made by the OR nurse – with the click of a button. This process ensures accountability since requests are never left unanswered, and it eliminates many of the delays, missed requests and noise problems of the past.

Patient Transfer: with four hospitals located throughout central Lisbon, patient transfers have always been challenging for CHLC. In fact, in the first quarter of 2008, patients spent a cumulative 100 hours waiting in ambulances during transfers. Patient flow has been dramatically improved, integrating com-

munication between hospital staff and transfer staff. An email is automatically sent to transfer staff once the process begins and outlines any necessary equipment required and special instructions.

Enhanced Supply and Service Requests: Designated hospital staff now acknowledge or escalate supply and service requests at the click of a button. This has virtually eliminated the need for overhead paging and one-off requests, since supply and service requestors simply click a button to communicate needs – there is no need to cross-reference staff schedules or attempt to contact multiple individuals.

Into The Future

Moving forward, CHLC is planning to use Connexall to:

- Integrate systems and create workflow improvements in the Obstetric Emergency Department
- Connect the blood banks at the four different hospitals to make it easier to manage blood supply
- Implement a Catastrophic Events Management process

“Connexall optimizes communications and reduces waiting times. It’s even had an indirect impact on our ability to better manage human resources. Connexall works well in OR spaces, but it’s even more effective once it’s implemented throughout an entire hospital.”

– Mercedes Bilbao

Chief Operating Nurse CHLC, Lisbon, Portugal

Connexall Results Summary

In the eight months of 2008 that Connexall was up and running, CHLC realized substantial savings, including:

- €96,000 (\$130,000 US) through more efficient responses to requests in OR procedures
- €131,600 (\$180,000 US) through simplified communications across the hospitals.

Some other notable improvements include:

- Sterile supply service: 20 minutes reduced to 45 seconds with Connexall
- Porter service response time: 2 minutes reduced to 12 seconds with Connexall
- Waiting time for Radiology: 1 hour reduced to 15 minutes with Connexall

In addition to financial savings and improved efficiencies, CHLC also saw increased patient comfort and satisfaction and improved teamwork through faster and simpler communications, all of which improved staff morale.

On May 29, 2009, Deloitte Portugal and Diário Económico awarded CHLC first place in the “Improvement in Health Procedures” category of their 7th annual Good Practices in the Public Sector Awards for the Connexall integrated communications platform.

The award is designed to recognize public entities that develop innovative projects and who can demonstrate improved resource management and quality of service.