

Fauquier Hospital

Technology Integration Results in a Professional and Efficient Patient Access Department



OVERVIEW

Fauquier Hospital, located about 40 miles southwest of Washington D.C., is an 86-bed, acute care hospital serving a rural/suburban community. Established in 1954 by a group of community volunteers, Fauquier Hospital is a not-for-profit, community organization, fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO).

THE CHALLENGE

Melissa Finley, the Director of the Patient Access Department at Fauquier Hospital, supports and encourages advancing technologies that help the hospital to be more efficient and ease patient anxiety, which is why when she learned about Qmatic at a healthcare convention, she began wondering if it was possible to combine her existing technology with the queuing and reporting capabilities that Qmatic had to offer. The Patient Access Department had been using PeopleAlert™ Glowster patient paging technology from JTECH Wireless Solutions to queue and call waiting patients. Finley and the patients at Fauquier Hospital enjoyed the uniqueness of the pagers and wanted to continue their use (they ensured that patient names were never called aloud, providing

total privacy: a high priority for Finley and her staff) but the time it took to admit patients and the wait times were significant and therefore unacceptable. Also, wait times were tracked manually: a process that was quickly becoming cumbersome. Ideally, Finley wanted to combine old technology with new to create a customized approach for patient care in the Patient Access Department.

In response to Finley's inquiries, Qmatic and JTECH collaborated on and developed a solution that integrated the JTECH pagers with Qmatic's Customer Flow Management software solutions.

The New Process

- Although hospital employees continue to greet patients and provide them with a JTECH PeopleAlert™ Glowster pager, they now also enter each patient into the Qmatic system, which simultaneously adds them to the queue and notifies the admissions registrar of their presence. The patient then waits until the pager is activated, at which time he or she is directed to the next available clerk who is prepared with all relevant information, thanks to the Qmatic software.

Statistical Information Collected

- The Qmatic Customer Flow Management software provides Fauquier Hospital with statistical information that identifies patient wait time, service needs, and the time it takes them to move through the admissions process. The statistical information is available on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. Finley looks at the data each day and keeps monthly reports.

Improved Traffic Management

- On average, Fauquier Hospital serves 6,500 patients every month. Finley's manual calculations indicate that 90% of her patients are admitted within 0-6 minutes, which she considers a good percentage; however, with Qmatic, she hopes to improve that number. She believes that will be easily accomplished since she now knows when her registrars are getting backed up due to high patient traffic.

Management Alerts

- With Qmatic configured to notify her when there are six or more patients waiting, she can neutralize any potentially chaotic situation by sending another employee to help, or even stepping in herself until the traffic slows to a manageable level. Finley is also notified when a patient spends more than ten minutes with a registrar: a maximum time that Finley feels is necessary to sufficiently register someone. If the limit is reached, she knows that either the employee or the patient is experiencing a problem that requires further attention.

THE RESULTS

Finley expected the admissions process in her department to undergo some foreseeable changes after incorporating the Qmatic system, but she and others were surprised by some unexpected results, like the positive affect the change has had on the Hospital's accounts receivable. The more reliable the information collected during the admissions process, the more likely the hospital receives

payment for services in a timely manner.

Additionally, there is the unexpected new feeling of employee empowerment. With immediate access to complete information when attending to a patient, employees are feeling more professional and better able to address a patient's needs. Finley believes that this, in turn, sets a positive tone for the entire hospital experience, easing patient anxiety and increasing patient confidence.

Highlights

- Eliminates manual patient counts and wait time calculation
- Assists in conforming to HIPPA standards through use of alphanumeric identifiers
- Provides visual patient communication
- Allows patients to sit comfortably while waiting for service
- Enhances patient's view of the quality of care and service



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