

Improve nursing communications— and patient care.

Connected smartphones for nursing professionals

Solution brief



Many health systems are supplementing traditional pagers and other legacy communication devices with smartphones, which put new capabilities in the hands of nurses. With robust mobile devices, nurses can speak directly with colleagues, send detailed texts and photos, access applications, and take advantage of the ever-expanding capabilities of smartphones.

When nurses use their private cell phones, it can put patient data at risk. That's why more hospitals are choosing a more secure, reliable solution—customized smartphones with built-in mobile device management and Verizon connectivity.

Meeting the needs of health systems

Nearly 80 percent of hospitals still use pagers, according to a definitive study in the *Journal of Hospital Medicine*.¹ Why? They're familiar, simple, and reliable. They can reach throughout facilities, even dense areas designed to limit x-ray exposure. And they can reach dozens or hundreds of people with ease. But as an aging technology, they're also becoming more difficult to support and maintain. And they lack the broader functionality of smartphones.

Smartphones are becoming increasingly popular with nurses.

Many nurses are supplementing their pagers by using their personal smartphones at work. Despite hospital policy restrictions, 67 percent of hospitals interviewed in a detailed study reported that staff nurses use personal smartphones for clinical communications and workflow.² They're sending text messages, photos, and sharing patient-related information with their colleagues. Why? Because smartphones are more advanced, user-friendly and full-featured than pagers. And they can augment laptop-based charting, making communication and care coordination easier and faster.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)— simple but risky

Using personal smartphones at work, while convenient, raises a wide range of issues. It puts a burden on nurses to use their own devices instead of a solution supplied (and funded) by their employer. On a broader level, it can create HIPAA compliance issues and security vulnerabilities.³ For example, personal phones may retain patient data and sensitive communications that could fall into the wrong hands when lost or stolen. Or they could provide cybercriminals with access to a healthcare system's computing network.

The real question isn't whether nurses should use smartphones, but how best to use smartphones as part of their daily work.

Creating a convenient, safe communication solution

A wide range of health systems are addressing the issue of ad hoc personal smartphone use by providing smartphones (primarily iPhones) to their nursing staff. However, they aren't providing off-the-shelf smartphones. They're equipping their nursing staff with connected smartphones deployed with mobile device management (MDM) and fast, reliable, secure Verizon connectivity.

To further the digital transformation of healthcare customers, Verizon provides complete, customized solutions—or kits—designed to meet their specific needs. These solutions deliver key benefits to nurses, other clinicians and overall health systems:

Reliable, secure connectivity

The award-winning Verizon network delivers the speed, reliability, coverage and performance that nurses need. With Verizon connectivity, nurses can communicate, access key applications, and collaborate—quickly, easily, and reliably. And the Verizon network is secure, helping preserve patient privacy—and protect the hospital computer network from cyberattacks.

Centralized control

Built-in Mobile Device Management provides centralized control, allowing healthy systems, hospitals, or departments to restrict the device to specific applications. For example, they may provide hospital management applications that enable voice communication, allow access to electronic medical records (EMR), and communicate with operational support staff. Should the phone ever get lost, MDM lets hospitals locate and wipe the device, ensuring patient privacy and network security.

Efficient communication and alerts

Nurses often need to be alerted to developing events in their facility, such as combative patients/visitors or patients that need additional assistance. Communication solutions for nurses need to streamline the process of sending and receiving these alerts. Workforce productivity solutions such as Push to Talk Plus and Business Messaging provide enhanced communication and collaboration capabilities—including multimedia sharing, on-the-fly talk groups and secured text messaging with specific groups, such as ER nurses, ICU nurses, or Hospital Security. These communication tools help empower nurses to communicate effectively, efficiently and securely.

The result? A new communication channel

With employer-supplied smartphones and advanced capabilities at their fingertips, nurses can communicate more easily—and provide better patient care. Smartphones empower nurses and provide proof that their work is valued and supported. By providing an advanced mobile solution, hospitals eliminate the risks inherent with using personal devices—from patient privacy to the potential for infection. In fact, some hospitals are reducing the risk even further with anti-microbial charging stations.

Why make smartphones part of the communication mix?

Despite their shortcomings, pagers remain a common tool for clinicians, along with a range of legacy communication devices that deliver specific (but limited) functionality. By deploying robust mobile communication solutions, health systems can enhance coordination among care providers, enable communication at the point of care, improve time management, facilitate better communication—and help mitigate nursing burnout.⁴ By partnering with Verizon, they can choose from a range of complete, flexible solutions for nursing communication—all with secure, reliable Verizon wireless connectivity at their core. And they gain a committed partner for their ongoing digital transformation.

Find out more about Verizon solutions for nursing communication.

Contact Verizon today to find out what solutions are available in your area.

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¹ "Hospital-Based Clinicians' Use of Technology for Patient Care-Related Communication: A National Study," Journal of Hospital Medicine, July 1, 2017.

² "Ethical Issues in Nursing: The Impact of Smartphones on Patient Care," Alvernia University, March 25, 2016.

³ Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

⁴ "Five Benefits of Using Smartphones for Nurse Communication," Terry Zyst, Healthcare Innovation, September 4, 2018.