

CASE STUDY NORTHSHORE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM

Overview

- Medical university needed to expand its video integration for better teaching
- Expansion and upgrade of the video conferences equipment took place
- University saved money and expanded their teaching options and reach



NorthShore University Health System is a not-for-profit academic health system focusing on student and patient needs throughout the greater Chicago area. Students participate in academic and clinical studies in one of four affiliate hospitals: Evanston Hospital, Glenbrook Hospital, Highland Park Hospital, and since 2008, Skokie Hospital. In addition, NorthShore owns and facilitates a world-renowned research institute. Experts from each location use video conferencing to improve patient care, save on travel, conduct departmental meetings and efficiently reach more students.

NorthShore was first introduced to IDS in 2003 when they decided to explore the benefits of using video conferencing to connect their hospitals via video. The three hospitals, each approximately 45 minutes travel time from each other, were connected with a robust Tandberg video conferencing solution.

In 2008, Skokie Hospital joined NorthShore. Then in 2009, NorthShore became affiliated with the University of Chicago and their need for video conferencing services jumped substantially. To complicate matters, the University of Chicago was new to video conferencing and with over an hour travel time away, successful video conferencing was mandatory.

Action

The original solution installed by IDS in 2003 was robust and designed for expansion. Each of the three hospitals had a main conference room where IDS designed and implemented an integrated video conferencing solution consisting of multiple cameras, a Tandberg 6000 MXP system, and wireless AMX touch panels. In addition, each hospital received a mobile video conferencing system which they utilized in various locations within each hospital. In order to facilitate complex multi-site calls, IDS deployed a Tandberg Multisite Conference Unit (MCU), which allowed all network video systems to join into the same call.

Soon after the initial solution was deployed, NorthShore decided to expand the scope of their video conferencing network in order to work more seamlessly across their network firewall for communications with outside organizations. IDS implemented a complete firewall traversal solution from Tandberg to fill this need. In the following years, NorthShore added additional rooms and endpoints as their needs dictated.

In 2009, when the video conferencing needs increased due to the addition of a fourth affiliate hospital and the relationship with the University of Chicago, IDS designed and launched a combination of Tandberg and Lifesize video conferencing systems to meet NorthShore's expansions.

Because of the very high security needs due to HIPAA and the fact that NorthShore is a trendsetter in electronic medical records implementations, an internal and external gatekeeper was used and controlled by the Tandberg firewall transversal system. Static IP addresses are assigned to each video conferencing unit on a segregated portion of the network.

"The custom AMX touch panels control user menus, administrative panels, lights, cameras etc. Instead of using various remotes and screens, the AMX touch panels make the system very user friendly," said Scott Hallen, Manager of Multimedia Services at NorthShore. IDS was able to take all of these components and make a seamless video conferencing system to meet the clinical, academic and expanding communication needs of the health system.

Results

Today, video conferencing is an everyday occurrence for the students and staff at NorthShore University Health System and the University of Chicago. Lectures, round table discussions, Q&A sessions, and special speakers are commonly broadcast to all locations in the network via video conferencing.

"Many departments use the system regularly just to talk to colleagues in another location for everyday type business. The ease of use makes it attractive for staff to use on a daily basis," said Scott. Departments such as Pathology and Cardiology utilize the video conferencing systems to collaborate with their colleagues from a distance and to better instruct the next generation of doctors and nurses.

Weekly Grand Rounds is an event hosted by the Department of Medicine where special guests give lectures on various topics of interest. The department head wanted everyone in the system to be able to view the Weekly Grand Rounds so they are also recorded and available on DVD. Speakers range from world renowned subject matter experts to local clinicians talking about specific cases. "This particular event has been very well received," said Scott. "Some departments even hold video calls every morning. A lot of learning is done by video conferencing at NorthShore."

IDS, through their strong commitment to customer service and designing the best solution for each customer, has helped NorthShore achieve their goals. The end result is that using video conferencing saves money, time, helps caregivers improve their skills, and have more time to devote to their patients – NorthShore University HealthSystem's number one priority.

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