

St. Clare's Hospital



Fujitsu LifeBook Tablet PC Plays Leading Role at New High-Tech Hospital

Challenge:

Implement a device that would allow caregivers to collect and share patient data digitally.

Solution:

Hospital staff chose the Fujitsu LifeBook T4000 Series Tablet PC for its convertible functions, excellent battery life and user-friendly features.

Benefits:

With patient information now at their fingertips, caregivers can focus on providing medical care rather than managing medical records.

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-Tanya Townsend, IT Director, Saint Clare's Hospital



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Opened in October 2005, Saint Clare's Hospital is a state-of-the-art hospital that shares a 56-acre campus with two medical clinics, and a diagnostic and treatment center. The 107-bed hospital combines the acumen of Saint Clare's 110-year-old parent company, Ministry Health Care, with technological innovations such as digital recordkeeping.

The Challenge: Collect, Share and Store Patient Data Digitally

Communication is a critical part of any caregiver's job. Doctors, nurses and other hospital staff are continuously reading, updating and sharing information, which can include everything from doctors' orders and progress notes to test results, vital signs and medication forms. Traditionally, this information was stored in a single chart in which staff recorded information by hand. Not only was information in this chart often illegible, it was not uncommon for caregivers to have to wait to access the chart, or worse, lose track of it. In fact, hospital staff often spent as much time managing paper medical records as they did caring for patients.

When Milwaukee-based Ministry Healthcare designed Saint Clare's hospital it set out to avoid this paper problem by digitizing all patient information. Not only would this save time and money related to filing and storing paper records, it would allow caregivers to share and access patient charts from anywhere on the large medical campus, which encompasses two out-patient clinics and a diagnostic and treatment center.

To make this digital dream a reality, the hospital needed to provide caregivers with a reliable, portable and easy-to-use means for reading and recording patient data. The hospital wanted to give caregivers the option of typing notes, dictating or using a stylus with a digitized form. “Physicians spend a typical day walking all around the campus,” says Tanya Townsend, IT Director at Saint Clare's. “We wanted a device that would allow them to access patient information from any place on campus.”

Fujitsu LifeBook® Tablet PCs Put Patient Information at Staff's Fingertips

In 2003, Saint Clare's sister facility Saint Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, Wis. had its information technology staff begin researching the best devices for digital charting. The hospital evaluated different devices from three manufacturers. The devices were comparable in price and size,” notes Townsend. “Fujitsu's long battery life and the

ability to change batteries without turning off the device pushed us in the Fujitsu direction.” Moreover, she adds, Fujitsu had a proven track record with colleagues at nearby Marshfield Clinic.

To make the final decision, the nursing staff tried out the different devices over a two-day period. The demo included tablets and laptops from three vendors. “Each person filled out a survey of the first and second choices for the tablets and laptops,” says Townsend.

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The Fujitsu LifeBook T4000 Series Tablet PC was a first choice for a number of reasons. First of all, its convertible features cater to users with different preferences. Saint Clare’s staff can use the Fujitsu tablet PC as a conventional notebook, with a keyboard and display. Alternatively, they can easily convert the notebook into a slate by swiveling the display 180 degrees and laying it flat on the keyboard. Using a stylus, they can check off digital forms, take notes in their own handwriting or convert their handwriting into typed text. When typing or writing isn’t the perfect solution, physicians can dictate notes directly into the tablet PC via a dual-array microphone.

The Fujitsu tablet PC also scored points for its portability. Given that hospital staff carry the PCs within the hospital and throughout the campus, it was critical that the device be durable and lightweight. The Fujitsu tablet PC is one of the lightest in its category, weighing just 4.3 pounds with a weight-saver feature. Its sleek dimensions (11.5 x 9.3 inches and less than 1.5 inches high) make it less cumbersome than a single patient’s file. Yet, the device is extremely robust. By connecting to the hospital’s comprehensive wireless network, physicians can use their Fujitsu tablet PCs to access pertinent patient information from virtually anywhere on Saint Clare’s campus.

Fujitsu Tablet PCs Help Improve Care, Save Time and Cut Administration Costs

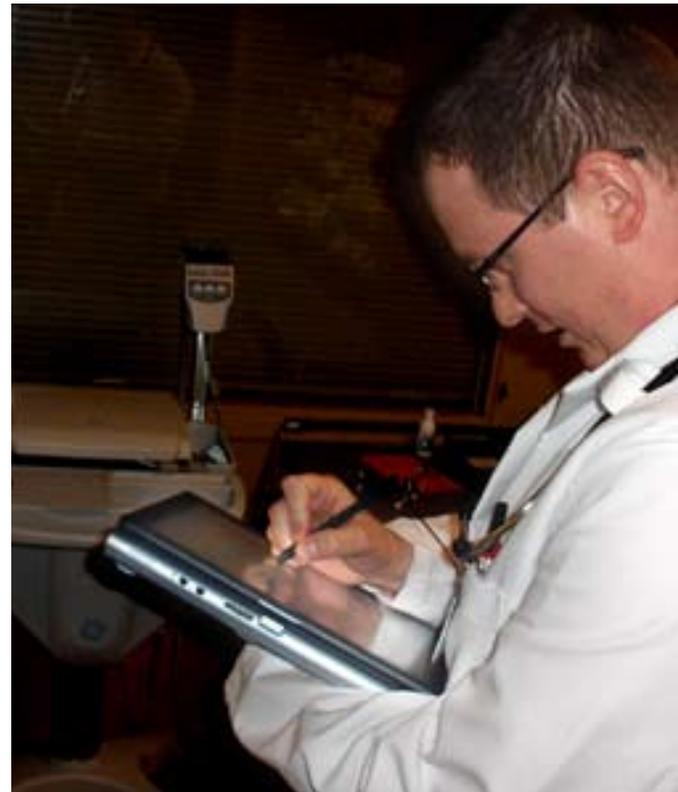
Today Saint Clare’s has implemented approximately 500 Fujitsu LifeBook T4000 Series Tablet PCs throughout its high-tech hospital. “This is nothing like a traditional hospital,” says Townsend. “A patient’s entire medical record is completely digital, with all information residing in our database.”

Digitizing data has helped improve the patient experience in many ways, beginning from the time they walk in the door. Rather than wait to fill out paper work, says Townsend, “patients are directed to their beds and information is collected at their bedside.”

Although some information, such as patient consent forms, is collected with pen and paper, it is immediately scanned into the system and stored electronically.

In a traditional hospital, patient information is stored in a centralized nurses’ station. Saint Clare’s designed its units with the goal of decentralizing information and putting nurses closer to their patients. Using tablet PCs, which they check out at the beginning of their shift, nurses do all of their documentation at the patient’s bedside or in an alcove just outside of the room. “Nurses are given a verbal patient report, but then everything they need is available on the computer,” says Townsend.

Saint Clare’s credentialed physicians, meanwhile, use Fujitsu tablet PC to take progress notes at patients’





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bedsides or dictate notes after the examination. The dictation is stored in the hospital database and sent electronically to a transcription office. "If the dictation has not yet been transcribed, staff can open the original dictation and listen to it," says Townsend.

Putting information at caregivers' fingertips has not only improved the patient experience, it has helped reduce the cost of care. There are significant savings on administrative costs. "We did not have to build a traditional medical filing room, pay for record storage or hire a staff to sup-

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port medical record tracking or filing," says Townsend. In fact, the hospital estimates that it has already saved between \$400,000 and \$500,000 up-front costs and operational costs. In addition to the savings associated with hiring fewer charting staff, the hospital is able to consolidate services, such as transcription and insurance coding, with its parent company, Ministry Health Care as well as with their partners at the Marshfield Clinic.

Moreover, medical staff can now spend their time focusing on caring for patients rather than managing paper charts. "We have increased efficiencies by having easy access to patient information available whenever needed, close to the patient," says Townsend. "The key goal of incorporating the Fujitsu tablet PCs was to have easy access to legible information. Gone are the days of illegible handwriting, difficult-to-read orders, and misplaced patient charts."

Thanks to Fujitsu tablet PCs, Saint Clare's caregivers can focus on providing medical care rather than managing medical records.